

COMMODORE Network

Newswatch

FAST-8

Commodore Network is proud to announce that we now have the "Fast-8" speed-up cartridge for the C64 ONLY now available. This unit speeds up your C64 to an 8 MHz operating speed, which is an increase of eight times normal speed for your 64. It can be used with outstanding results with GeoRAM or BBGRAM by utilising a cartridge port expander (they both access the cartridge port), though, at present, it is incompatible with RAMLink. However, patches are being worked on. You can create "virtual" RAM disks under GEOS using a special patch and RAM from GeoRAM and the inbuilt Flash-8 RAM (256k or 1 Meg, depending on your version) working together. It works well with gateWay, and, apparently, has no troubles with CMD Hard Drives. At present, there is no speed up for your 1541/71 drives, but, once again, a patch is being developed. As these patches and improvements become available, those who have purchased one of these units from us will be sent copies free of charge.

I must remind you that this is for the 64 or (64 mode) ONLY!. C128 owners should be patient, as a C128 version, supporting ALL operating modes, is being worked on.

Fast-8 comes with all current patches for use in and out of GEOS, a demo program, and a version of CP/M for use with the unit.

All things being well, a full review should appear in next months edition of C.N.

CEE-64 ALIVE!

Jack Vander White, publisher of the American disk magazine, Cee-64 Alive! has announced that there will be some major changes for his magazine in 1995 due to difficulties within the partnership with Gaelyne Morenac, the editor. These changes will see, amongst other things, a change in name to, at this stage, Commodore Cee. Jack is also considering a change in frequency to around four issues a year, though the size of each issue could well double. All this is still under consideration, and will not affect current subscribers since all subscriptions end at the finish of this calendar year and will come up for renewal before any of the mooted changes take effect. At last indication, we will be selling Commodore Cee on an issue by issue basis instead of by subscription next year.

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Editorial

Well, here it is, October, and boy, has a lot been happening behind the scenes at Commodore Network. As I have been hinting at over recent issues, we have finally snared the rights to distribute several bits and pieces from Germany here in Australia/New Zealand, including the much vaunted "Fast-8" speed-enhancement system for the C-64 which I have sitting next to me on the desk at the moment. I'm just itching to try it out, and hopefully will, come the weekend. The hardware comes with a demo program and a couple of GEOS programs to help the user make use of the astounding speed-up (imagine GEOS running at eight times normal speed - might even make Artie think about going back to a 64!) and the in-built RAM (two versions - 256k and 1 meg). It also comes with a promising version of CP/M to operate at 8 MHz. I'm not sure of the compatibility with 128 CP/M at the moment, and therefore, whether my 128 CP/M library will be of use with it, but I'm certainly looking forward to finding out. Hopefully, I'll have a full translation of the German documents soon and well be able to present a full review for you next month. The Fast-8 is available for \$375 (\$395 for non-members) for the 256 k model, and \$395 (\$445 for non-members) for the 1 Meg model. Please allow four to six weeks for delivery, as these will be ordered in as we receive orders from you. User Groups, if you have two or more members interested, we will supply at Commodore Network membership prices.

We will also make available several other pieces of hardware as they are evaluated and costed out. Those currently being looked at include "Auto 40/80" - a video switcher for the 128,

"Printer Booster" - boosts the signal on the user port so that a printer can be connected on a cable up to five metres in length. "GEOS mouse" - a high-quality proportional mouse with pad that emulates a 1351 or a joystick as required (looks a little pricey at the moment), GEOS cable - printer cable to form a User/Centronics port connection between computer and printer with inbuilt reset switch. Probable selling price will be around \$45 maximum, but am reticent to bring it in as these are available from other sources.

GEOS users will also find that they should have access to a large amount of new GEOS software, much of which is to be announced over coming months. Most of this will be coming direct from Germany and as a result, there may be holdups between us arranging the deal and the product becoming available as we need to get documentation translated to English. We will also endeavour to have program text (menus, info-boxes, etc. within a program) translated. Those GEOS items already agreed upon include GeoCom 1.5 - A new compiler for GEOS sporting a totally new language for programming in this environment (review shortly, I hope!) and the "Software Collection" - a selection of five 1541 disks of GEOS software, including "Makroform V1.0", "The LQ-Font Collection #2", "NLQ-font and Print", and "The Best of Vol.#1". This collection will be reviewed in an upcoming GEOSgenie column. GeoCom should retail for around the \$45 mark, and the "Software Collection" for something like \$55. By the time you read this, there should be considerably more items available as well, and hopefully we'll be able to

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announce firm prices for you next month.

Back at home, I am in the middle of organising "Artie's Ultimate GEOS Compendium", which I hope will be available before Christmas. This is based on Arthur Steven's personal software collection of GEOS which he has graciously made available, along with quite a number of disks out of my personal collection. It will also come with at least one binder and what looks like being a copious amount of text. I may end up either condensing all this into one binder along with a selection of programs on accompanying disk/s, or presenting it as a number of "Volumes" sold either separately or as a collection. Certainly, there's a heck of a lot of interesting information here, much of it widely unknown, or at least I didn't know it.

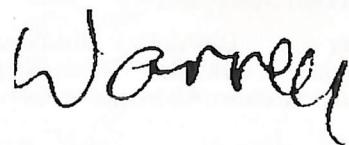
A second project is the "GeoPublisher's Compendium". This will consist of collections of original fonts, borders, and clip-art, and come with a binder and print-out. It will most probably also come with a section of text devoted to getting the best out of GeoPublish, and containing numerous hints and tips. In order to expedite matters with this particular project, I am throwing the doors open and inviting submissions of ORIGINAL clip-art, borders, fonts, and indeed anything remotely related to GeoPublish from the readers. Anything submitted and accepted will become the copyright of Commodore Network and may not be freely distributed, but owners of all works accepted will receive a copy of the completed work as payment. Naturally enough, full credit will be given the individual artist/designer in the text for their work.

Back overseas, and America hasn't been left out of our plans. We will be carrying several new items shortly from that part of the world,

including yet another GEOS collection (The GeoManiacs Collection #1), a reportedly excellent CAD package (CADPIC), and, if we can work things out, perhaps a new book on programming (Programmer's Cross Reference Guide). There's also "geoProgrammer Help", a collection of additional programs and patches which will make this much vaunted piece of software work in 128 mode, Two C128 collections, four Plus four collections, and the "Alive! ClipArt Collection #1" containing 999 Print shop style images on 111 Fun Graphics Machine clip art screens and including a printout and binder. We are even making inquiries into locating and perhaps selling repair manuals for our beloved machines here in Australia (including the drives), and, indeed, chips and spare parts, for those that are interested. Hopefully we'll be able to make a more substantial announcement shortly as to price and availability of the all of the above.

CHANGES

Over recent months we've experienced an alarming drop in initial renewals of subscriptions after a subscription has fallen due. On investigation, it seems that the majority of those that did not resubscribe missed the message on their label. For this reason, we will be going back to inserting a notice within the pages of YOUR C.N. when YOUR subscription is due. We will also be following up with a reminder/"thank you for your past support" note should a subscription lapse.



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This month, the first item for Review is the disk of GEOS Utilities 2.0 by Nate Fiedler USA. Nate Fielder is an incredibly talented geoProgrammer, with the major Application of geoCanvas v1.2, and the new upgrade v3.0 {40 & 80 columns}, already to his credit. The GEOS programs on this disk are further evidence of Nate's creative, and sometimes fun, ideas....

GEOS Utilities 2.0

All the programs now operate in both 40 and 80 column modes, and work in GEOS 64/128 v2, with disk access recognizing up to four drives. There is ample documentation throughout the disk. I want to group the GEOS programs on this disk into areas of interest. The topics I have chosen are System Enhancement, Utility, Special Interest, Application Aid, Security Aid, and Novelty. Hopefully it should make it simpler to discuss the programs, as there are so many on this 1541 disk !.

System Enhancement : AutoAlarm, BlackOut, NewSysErr

Utility : DirPrint, DiskProtect, EggTimer, FindFile, HeaderEditor, Particle, Redirect, UnMakeGEOS

Special Interest : PatchConvert, SaveWiz, SysInfo, geoDump

Application Aid :: Write : DeleteHFP, NoPictures :: Paint : PhotoPrint, ScreenGrab

Security Aid : FileLock, LockScreen, Login

Novelty : Chaos, DisBAM, FancyStart, NewPointer, RAMTest

AutoAlarm is an Auto-Exec {A-E} file for your boot disk, after the Configure file. The alarm time is set very simply from the InfoBox, so that when you boot up, the alarm will tone ten times when the pre-set time is reached, every day. BlackOut v4 is also an A-E file to place on your boot disk. This program will save your screen from burn-in by blanking it out after a set time limit. After you first run it, and enter the time delay from 1 to 18 minutes, you can place it on your boot disk. The time delay you have entered will then be

automatically installed with the program. Two and a half to three minutes worked reasonably well.

NewSysErr is another A-E file which could be regarded as an improved error-trapping routine. When placed on your boot disk it installs a new routine to replace the SYSTEM ERROR NEAR .. DBox. At a time when the old DBox would be displayed, the new routine will reboot from the REU, or exit back to basic if you don't have an REU. Quite an improvement over a locked up computer !. This A-E really works excellently, as I watched it save me from a couple of crashes. The only thing is that it won't work with BlackOut, and you wouldn't need to.

DirPrint is an Application {Appl} that will print an ASCII directory of your disk. It is quick and simple, with an NLQ option. At first I thought that this was just what I needed, as DirPrint could access up to four devices, work with 41/71/81 or RAM drives, and operate in 80 columns. But then my wish list came out again because it only printed the filename and file size, with none of the other necessary details like GEOS file type, Permanent Name, Date & Time, KB, WP, and Parent Appl. This is just a personal view, as quite likely, for most people the filename and file size could well be sufficient. But for my purposes and record keeping, there just was not enough detail in the printout for it to go in my folders, but it got the closest any one has ever been to my own ideal.

DiskProtect is a very useful Appl and it is designed to change the protection information on any disk. Again it will work with 41/71/81 or RAM drives, and your options are Boot, Master, Unprotect, or Check protection. Since GEOS refuses to format a disk that it detects is a Master disk, it may be that you will have a use for this program someday, to protect your own work !.

EggTimer is a terrific Desk Accessory {DA}, and it is so easy to use. When called up, EggTimer's DBox is displayed where you can enter the

number of hours and minutes that you want counted down. To start the timer, a simple click on UnSet 'sets' the clock and you can Quit back to what you were doing. When the time is up, the timer tones ten times and you can rush off to set the microwave or something {can't seem to do that from GEOS yet}. EggTimer's convenience of use puts it way above the GeoWorks alarm clock on the System disk.

FindFile is now an extremely useful DA in this upgraded form. FindFile is NOT case sensitive, and it is an excellent tool to find your files, as it will access up to four devices online. The wildcard asterisk {*} is supported during searches, and any matches are displayed in the DBox list field, along with the deskTop page and position of your file. To quote Nate, 'it's likely you will find any file you are looking for', he is right!.

HeaderEditor is an Appl for those who like to tinker and go where you couldn't go before. It allows the header block of any file, on any disk in up to four devices, to be modified. However, you had better know your way around GEOS headers, if not, don't use it !. This Appl should only be used by the serious tinkerer. Use your power with caution as any stuff up will be yours.

Particle is a DA which would be just the thing for GEOS CMD Hard drive users. It will list all the GEOS partitions available, and when you need to switch partitions, select one and click the Open gadget. Redirect is an Appl that will attempt to recover mangled directories of any disk, should it suffer a directory wipeout. Redirect is not perfect, but it may save you a lot of grief.

UnMakeGEOS is an Appl to use when, for whatever reason, you wish to revert

Jane Voskamp-Jones

a GEOS disk to a standard CBM disk. Someone out there has a reason to use this. PatchConvert is an Appl used solely to modify Convert 2.5 which is used to convert files between CBM DOS and GEOS formats for BBS use. The modification will remove the excess DBoxes that Convert displays during the conversion process. The down side is that error DBoxes are also removed. SaveWiz is an A-E designed specifically to store the activator code for geoWizard to the REU, so that geoWizard is not disabled after a reset. Put the file on your boot disk, and SaveWiz takes care of it. Unfortunately for me, when I used SaveWiz it installed, but then continued to pull high on my 1581, and consequently I ended up with a locked system that even

NewSysErr couldn't get me out of !.

SysInfo is a DA with the sole purpose of displaying system information for you, regarding the GEOS v#, the Time and Date, current Input driver, current Printer driver and memory location including IRQ, BRK, and NMI. The Alarm status is shown, along with Drives A - C with the current drive flagged with *. The REU size is also given. That's about it, but it might be handy some time. geoDump is a DA monitor type of program. It displays memory in hexadecimal {base 16} or ASCII characters. You can page through memory, or enter a new hex\$ address. The DA doesn't do more than that though.

DeleteHFP is an Appl geoWrite users have needed for absolutely ages. Many people require a way to delete a single page from a geoWrite document, and up until DeleteHFP, we have had to do it the hard and slow way, from within geoWrite. But not any more. This Appl allows the user to delete the Header, Footer, or any range of pages from a geoWrite document. Only someone who knows what they are doing should hack up their documents this way though. The only down side is that any photo scraps that were on a 'deleted' page, are not removed from the VLIR index table, and they will still take up space.

NoPictures is another Appl created to assist geoWrite users. This Appl will remove unused pictures from a geoWrite document this could take over from DeleteHFP. But more than that, you can use it to 'combine two geoWrite files' or to 'split a geoWrite document'. All scraps on corresponding pages will 'also go along for the ride'.

PhotoPrint is an Appl for printing out the first photo album on the current disk. When form feed is off, the scraps are printed down the page with two blank lines between each picture. A few wishes here, it would have been nicer to select from any Album files on disk, also to be able to access other disks and devices, and printing across would have been a paper saver, other than that, it is an extremely useful Appl. ScreenGrab is a DA that will allow you to save the entire screen as a photo scrap to the current disk, and it supports colour !. This Appl works well, and could prove to be very useful.

FileLock is an Appl designed for users who wish to 'protect' their document files using a password system. This Appl is an interesting security approach, as a file once locked, can no longer be opened by its Parent Application, but must first be unlocked using FileLock and the correct

password. LockScreen is a DA designed for the security conscious user. LockScreen will lock the system with a password, which is required to be entered correctly before it will unlock the system. Login is an A-E file to protect your boot disk. The first time you run Login, you enter a name and pass code. When placed onto your boot disk, Login will prompt for the name and pass code, and keep prompting for it, before continuing the boot process.

The Chaos Appl file, is an interesting graphic display of fractal randomness and the chaos theory. DisBAM is an Appl to display the BAM of any disk, 41/71/81 or RAM in graph form, showing the free space on the current disk. The FancyStart A-E file is an improvement on the previous version that was available. It is on ALL my boot disks simply because it looks neat to have a colour start up in GEOS !, in 40 or 80 columns now !. NewPointer is another A-E file to jazz up the look of GEOS. Placed onto a v2 boot disk it will alter the internal mouse pointer during booting, to a more sleek looking beast. RAMTest is an Appl to run only when you believe that your REU may be faulty. You don't come back to GEOS after the test !.

Synopsis

This is a Utility package well worth your money. Along with a number of very good upgrades on previous public domain offerings - FindFile, HeaderEditor, FancyStart. You also get some brand new GEOS programs that users have needed in quite a while - DeleteHFP, DiskProtect, EggTimer, NewSysErr, NoPictures, and ScreenGrab, to name some if you needed reminding. The best thing you could do for yourself, is to purchase this package !.

Not enough can be said for Authors and Programmers like Nate, who continue to give GEOS and the 8-bit line of Commodore computers their support, by producing ever new and innovative programs to enhance our systems. Just talking about them isn't enough however, we need to purchase their programs and give these Authors our full support. If you are intrigued by any of the programs reviewed here, do the right thing and plan to buy them now ...

GEOS Utilities 2.0 can be purchased direct from Nate for US\$15.00 {includes S&H} [or US\$5.00 to upgrade from 1.0 to 2.0, previous owners only]

Nate L. Fiedler 5711 Mt Pleasant Road Bernville PA 19506-9313 USA or in Australia, for A\$24.00 {includes

S&H} [or A\$12.00 to upgrade from 1.0 to 2.0, previous owners only]

Distributed by Peter Hunt 70 Betula Street Doveton VIC 3177

Readers Three Wishes And All That ...

From across the Tasman, Jim Mullen of Oamaru NZ, "Reply to GEOSgenie, ... I am one that gets more out of watching demos and can understand it better. I don't consider myself as slow or thick as I was in my 50's when I got my 64. So to answer your question [June94] about simplifying a GEOS manual, is yes, it would be of great benefit to all those new GEOS users. Once they get to know the terms it will be home and hose. So give it a go and see what you can do to help the new generation of GEOS users.

I don't think the new computer user is slow or not very bright, it is because they are not used to the terms that are used and as far as the manuals are concerned they are written as if you have been using computers for years. It is also very difficult when a new user has bought a second hand computer and has GEOS, disk drive and NO MANUALS to go with them. I have helped out a few users and two or three demos are all it takes before they have the idea on how to use it.

I am a GEOS nut now and still learning and the more I use this program the more I enjoy it. The v2.0 GEOS manual is a little more understandable although it might be that I am now familiar with the terms and know how it works. Good luck with your column".

Gg. Thanks Jim, for being the first to respond to the 'Are users generally really not very bright' opinion. Your insight and point of view is very helpful. I personally thought that Jean Nance was taking it a bit too far with her 'not bright' comment. It is also good to see the spirit of helping others is alive and well with CBM and GEOS users.

Unfortunately these days there is a growing number of new users who do not have a Manual through buying second hand equipment. We all need to assist them, and share our devotion for our machines, as much as possible. As for simplifying the GEOS manual, well a quick look at 'The World of GEOS HandBook Series' {**} shows a publication coverage that does exactly that, along with explaining work disks and how they should be prepared.

From further across the ocean, Michael D Pearson of Warwickshire UK, writes ... "I was very pleased to read your

GEOSgenie columns and I am sure that if you are able to cram as much into future months as the first two [June & July 94], then I am sure that the style of concentrated enthusiastic GEOS facts and fun will fascinate new / old / potential GEOS users. Congratulations, and keep up the good work."

And from GEONEWS supplement, OZ Pages August 1994, Michael Campbell-Burns of Cranbourne VIC adds "... [Jane] certainly writes a great article. Her column in Commodore Network is a big improvement over Artie's {sorry Artie}.

Gg. Thanks for the kudos both Michael's. I'll continue to do my best for all the GEOS fanatics out there. But, I think Artie did do a good job with most of the former GEOZ column, we just approach things differently. To each their own, we are supposed to be different. It would be a BIG yawn if we were not.

Artie's comment: I have no problem with the letter, the simple fact was that I could not devote the kind of time that I ideally would have liked to the GeoZ column, coupled with a de-emphasis in my business on Geos64. This was not good for my readers. I congratulate Jane on her no-nonsense approach to Geos and state here and now that GEOSgenie is a firm favourite in the Stevens household. Well done Jane!

From Tim Stoner of Ballajura WA comes a telephone call regarding "Paul B Murdaugh of Springfield MO USA {New Horizons Software}. Apparently Paul has stopped selling DualTopv3 and will not respond to post or telephone enquiries. A former beta tester, James Robbins of 2nd Floor, 326 Fern Ave Lyndhurst NJ USA, is reported to be distributing the former New Horizon Software products".

Gg. Thanks a lot for that information Tim. We will make some enquiries via James Robbins and let you know any developments.

Some recent [edited] gossip from the GENIE BBS about Richard Ollins of Rio Computers {HandyScanner64 and PageFox}. [While the following comments may be true, they are however, unverified].

-- From RANDOM-MAG [Random Mag] in June 1994. Apparently RIO Computers has gone out of business. Ollins is selling off some Amiga and Commodore products, and will continue to process orders for products which RIO imported, along with running the Com-Gen on a demand basis. RIO's number has been changed, but by calling the old number you will receive the new number. The last phone number listed in the RIO ads in Random Magazine were {702} 454-0335 and {702} 454-7700.

-- From CMD-DOUG in June 1994. The current RIO number is {702} 369-2633. Address is 572 Tam O'Shanter, Las Vegas, NV 89109. As per Commodore World, issue 2. Info is direct from RIO. BTW, RIO has dropped the Action Replay MK VI.

Gg. Thanks for that information. It's a pity about RIO though!. Quite a few people are still in the 'thinking of buying a scanner' stage.

Next month, we Review the Fonts for GEOS disks 1 & 2 by Michael D Pearson UK. Also we check out the GENIE BBS PD Updates from Rick Coleman USA, and the latest happenings on the German GEOS scene from Michael Renz. Until then, happy GEOSing.

Send in your comments, or great GEOS discoveries, and I will respond when I can in this column, unless you wish a private reply, in which case please send a SSA{Business}E and I will write you back. Special thanks to Rick Coleman {Photo Mover fame}, our USA GENIE BBS correspondent for your continued support, and to Michael Renz {Performance Peripherals Europe}, our German correspondent, for your continued support.

**CN GEOSgenie
PO Box 635
Blair Athol
South Australia 5084**

{**} The World of GEOS HandBook Series {I, II, III}, are currently available from JMV Grafix

The World of GEOS



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This publication reviews many excellent programs created by individual GEOS Authors
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Perfect Print GEOS LQ Collette Utilities HandyScanner 64 & PageFox
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GEOS GEOS GEOS GEOS

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Please contact:

Korella Trading , 1/505 Pacific Highway, Belmont, N.S.W., 2280. Phone (049) 45 8455
Jeff Carey (C-64 Public Domain (S.A.)), Box 146 GPO, Adelaide, S.A., 5001. Phone (08) 294 8447

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Clublinks



Welcome to the October column.

Over the past few months I have come to the conclusion that the problem with many of the clubs at present is "club politics". In fighting amongst committee members can have a disastrous effect on a club. I know membership within most clubs is on the decline and so too are club finances meaning that clubs are unable to give members the full support that they expect from their club. Members stay away from meetings to avoid becoming involved and having to take sides. And the membership dwindles even further. Potential members stay away as well.

Come on out there! Stop the fighting and bickering among yourselves and get out and grab some new members. Clubs are run democratically so there is bound to be some aspect of the club you don't like but don't run the club down because of it. YOU can change it! Offer some practical help or stand for a position on the committee. Encourage your friends to join by showing them the positive side of the club. If there must be arguments keep it in the committee room.

To prevent loss of members who have now moved over to an IBM or

compatible machine some clubs are now giving serious consideration to catering to those members. A lot of former 64/128 users who do buy themselves a PC still keep their 8-bit machines so a club could maintain those memberships by opening memberships to PC users. The down side of course is that the Amiga and PC users become the majority in a club tending to force out the 64 and 128 users. Eventually the 64/128 users stop coming along and that leaves them without a club. This situation has already happened to several clubs so please think very seriously about the future.

Talking about the future it seems that there is a persistent rumour that the 64 is back in production in the States and that club and user group memberships are beginning to grow. If the rumours are true then the future looks pretty good. CMD now have the rights to GEOS and there is some great new hardware and software coming from them as well. PD programmers are giving us some great material so we can now do things with our machines that were never thought possible a few years ago. Even after all these years the good old 64/128 machines are still holding their own.

The problems with the Canberra club unfortunately persist. Their secretary resigned and the treasurer died suddenly which certainly did not help the situation. The Bateman Bay meetings are still going quite well with mainly Amiga members attending but the Canberra meetings have only had 2 members each meeting for the past several months. I can only say that I hope that as the warmer summer weather comes along so will the attendance's at the meetings improve. If you live in or around Canberra contact the club and show your support. The club meets twice a month in Canberra and once a month in Batemans Bay. Contact either the President Matt Blydenstein on (06) 281 2714 or the newsletter editor Ted Woodwell on (06) 281 6347 for any information about the club. The club meets twice a month at present.

I'm amazed at the support shown for both Commodore Network and Cee64 Alive at both the clubs with which I'm associated. Network is the only hardcopy magazine produced in Australia for 64/128 users whilst Cee64 Alive has to be the best disk magazine around. At around \$3.50 for Network each month and around \$6.00 for Cee64 Alive each two months I'm

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sure no-one can argue about the value. Of course if your club does not sell either of these then ask your club committee to contact Warren to solve the problem.

Judging has begun of your newsletters. Warren is the judge and he will be making his announcement soon. I've been impressed with some of the newsletters that I've been sent. It's great what can be produced by a 64 or 128. So keep up the good work. Warren will also be announcing the prize that your club can win.

It was disappointing news that Commodore Force had folded. Both it and Commodore Format were the magazines for the games players amongst us giving previews, reviews and reports of what was happening with games in the 8-bit world as well as games hints, tips, cheats and solutions. Over the years I have found interesting bits and pieces amongst its pages and its demise was certainly unexpected. But of course it joins some great magazines in that newsgency up in the sky. For all the games freaks out there Commodore Format is still around and is now the only British 64/128 mag around.

Keep the information about your club happenings coming so that we can let everyone out there know what's happening in your part of the world. Keep sending in your clubs' newsletters as I look forward to them each month.

The address for this column is PO Box 244, WARILLA NSW 2528 or phone (047) 973159.

Bye till next month

BUCKY

CHANGE OF MEETING

C64 Developments Inc, the Wollongong 64/128 Club, has now combined its SIG meeting and its regular meeting. The meeting night is the 2nd Friday night of each month. The meetings start at 6.30pm and the venue is unaltered. If you live in the Illawarra area or the southern suburbs of Sydney why not come along and join one of the largest 64/128 clubs in Australia. Phone Jeff Gale on (042) 71 5098 for any information.

CLUB LIST

This is a list of some of the user groups in Australia and New Zealand that cater for members with 64's or 128's. If you want any information or details about the club contact the person listed or write to the address shown. There is also a list of mail/postal groups as well. If you write to a club please enclose either a stamped self-addressed envelope or a stamp or reply coupon for your reply. Remember that school and

public holidays can affect meeting dates. ALWAYS check with the club contact first.

AUSTRALIA

Albury/Wodonga Commodore User Group Inc, PO Box 1014, ALBURY NSW 2640 - 1st Tuesday 7.30pm Gas & Fuel Corp Building, Hume & Townsend Sts, Albury - Rod Graeber (060) 21 3703

C64 Developments Inc (Wollongong C64/128 Club) PO Box 150, UNANDERRA NSW 2526 - 2nd Friday 6.30pm Unanderra Community Centre, Princes Highway, Unanderra - Jeff Gale (Secretary)(042) 71 5098

Commodore 64/128 Club of NSW (formerly Penrith Commodore Users Group - now incorporating SYDCOM) 12 Budgeree Rd, TOONGABBIE NSW 2146 - 3rd Wednesday 7.30pm Minchinbury Neighbourhood Centre, Minchin Rd, Minchinbury - Steve Stecyk (President)(02) 631 2323

Commodore Hornsby User Group Inc, PO Box 1578, HORNSBY NORTHGATE NSW 2077 - 2nd & 4th Wednesdays 7.30pm St Leos College, Wahroonga - Allan Hall (02) 476 4929

Commodore User Group (ACT) Inc, PO Box 409, CURTIN ACT 2605 - check for Canberra meetings' dates and venues. - Batemans Bay meetings 3rd Saturday Pearly Beach Baptist Church Hall - phone Matt Blydenstein (06) 281 2714 for all information.

Muswellbrook Combined Computer Group, PO Box 648, MUSWELLBROOK NSW 2333 - contact Jim Shorter on (065) 47 9144 for meeting details.

Newcastle Commodore Users Group, c/- 22 Copeland St, LAMBERTON NSW 2299 - phone George Morrison (049) 57 4271 for information.

Tuggerah Lakes Commodore Users Group, PO Box 659, TOUKLEY NSW 2259 - phone John Davies (043) 93 1921 for any information.

Melbourne Commodore Computer Club Inc, PO Box 177, BOX HILL Vic 3128 - 2nd Wednesday 7.30pm Courtyard Room, Nunawading Civic Centre, Whitehorse Rd - Bernie O'Shea (President)(03) 438 1625

Yarra Valley Commodore Users Group, c/- 13 Cumberland Cres, CHIRNSIDE PARK Vic 3116 - 1st Tuesday 8pm Lilydale Elderly Citizens Club - Theo Hristakos (03) 735 5310

South Australian Commodore Computer User Group Inc, PO Box 427, NORTH ADELAIDE SA 5006 - 1st & 3rd Mondays 7.30pm North

Adelaide Primary School- John (08) 296 7761 or Phil (08) 381 8444

Southern Districts Computer Users Club Inc (Adelaide), 4 Barbara Ave, MORPHETT VALE SA 5162 - 3rd Wednesday 7.30pm Home Economics Room, Christies Beach High School (West), Beach Rd, Christies Beach - Malcolm Brumaley (08) 382 8614

Computer Club of WA Inc (Perth) - phone Tom Lee on (06) 332 6374 for all enquiries.

Cairns Commodore Users Group, PO Box 7, EARLVILLE Qld 4878 - 1st Tuesday 7.30pm Cairns Education Centre, Greenslopes Road, Edge Hill - Bruce Bimrose (070) 54 1949

Commodore Computer Users Group (Qld) Inc, PO Box 274, SPRINGWOOD Qld 4127 - 1st Tuesday 7pm Bardon Professional Centre - Gordon Wright (07) 299 7789

Woombbug 8-bit - 4th Saturday 1pm - 4pm Tea Room, Masons Hall, Hill St, Woombie - Scott Roseboom (074) 48 5845

Tasmanian Commodore Users Group, GPO Box 673, HOBART Tas 7000 - 3rd Wednesday 7.30pm Derwent Regional Library, Glenorchy - Stephen Cook (002) 47 9985

John Buckingham

NEW ZEALAND

Christchurch Commodore Users' Group Inc, PO Box 4665, CHRISTCHURCH - 4th Tuesday 7.30pm Philipstown School - Dave Maguire (03) 348 5976

Kapiti Commodore Users Group, 24 Makarini St, PARAPARAUMI - 1st Friday 7.30pm Kapiti College, Margaret Rd, Raumati Beach - John Hughes (04) 298 4349

Manawatu Commodore Users Group, 83 Havelock Ave, PALMERSTON NORTH - 1st Monday 7pm St Marks Church Hall - Sydney Mounsey (06) 357 9858

North Otago Commodore Users Group - contact Jim Mullen on (03) 434 7655 for any information.

N.Z. Commodore Users Group Inc, PO Box 2878, WELLINGTON - contact Neville Lockett (04) 470 4707 for details concerning meeting times and venues.

Otago Commodore 64 Club (Dunedin) - contact John Knight 26 Estuary Crescent Fairfield Dunedin

Waikato Commodore Computer Users Group, 162 Pukete Rd, HAMILTON -

1st & 2nd Thursday 7pm Cobham Drive Hall, Hamilton - Raymond Benson (07) 847 2367

Whangarei Combined Computer Club - contact John Pitt (09) 438 6651 for all information regarding this club.

POSTAL GROUPS

All these groups are mail based groups that cater for those users who are not able to attend a normal club or want to join a second club. Most provide a regular newsletter and give you access to PD programs and program information as well as give you the opportunity to meet other members through correspondence or phone contact.

GeoCLUB (GEOS users) c/- Peter Hunt 70 Betula Street, DOVETON Vic 3177 - Frank Cassidy (03) 791 4991

Hills 64 Group C/- Post Office, COCKATOOS Vic 3781 - Ivan Blitz

Plus4/C16 Users Group 36 Western Highway, BLAXLAND NSW 2774 - Tony Ellis (047) 39 1528

The Old Codgers (over 40's) 18 Windsor Street, EDGEWORTH NSW 2285 - Gordon Screen

The Right Direction User Group 2/9 Reid Street, MOONAH Tas 7009 - Shane Boswell

Woombug 8-bit c/- Post Office, WOOMBYE Qld 4559 - Scott Roseboom (074) 47 9985

Meeting 64/128 Users Through The Mail 1576B County Road 2550E, ST JOSEPH IL 61873 USA - Jean Nance

Many regular clubs can also cater for postal (associate) members as well. Check with your local club.



Commodore Network

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Warren Naismith

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Victoria 3644

Page 128

Welcome to another month's C128 column. This month's offering differs slightly from those of recent issues in that we no longer have "CP/M Corner" incorporated within the column. I have decided to turn this into a separate entity as interest seems sufficient to do this. The advantage (to you) is that you will now get more purely 128 information in your column. The disadvantage (to me) is that I have to come up with more to keep you happy. Anyhow, enough of this, let's get on with the show.

Thoughts on Autoboot

Now, I'm sure the vast majority of people reading this column are well aware of the C128's autoboot facility, but how many of you know its workings, and the potential held within this facility. Not many, I'm sure. In this month's presentation, I will try and describe the process step by step, and to suggest a few possibilities that you may like to play around with. I'm sure many of you will be surprised at just what is possible!

Let's start our discussion with a breakdown of what actually takes place when you insert that autoboot disk in the drive and start (or reset) your computer.

- 1) On start-up, the 128 engages BASIC
- 2) The drive is accessed, and the information located on track #1, sector #0 (the boot block) is loaded into addresses 0B00 through 0BFF. This region comprises the cassette buffer on your machine.

Note: The only occasion when no information is read into these locations is when a disk is absent from the drive, otherwise, whether the disk contains a boot block or not is immaterial, the information, whatever it is, stored on track #1, sector #0 is transferred into the buffer.

- 3) If the information transferred begins with the three ASCII characters "CBM", your computer recognises that particular disk as a BOOT disk, and will proceed to print the word "BOOTING" to screen. This being the case, the steps described following this paragraph are enacted. If, however, "CBM" is not found in the first three locations on track #1, sector #0, the system will return to BASIC, and the

READY prompt presented.

4) OK, so the machine found the letters "CBM" in the correct spot. It now has a look at the next four locations and, if they contain non-zero values, the computer will read in boot sectors from the first and subsequent tracks as necessary. To do this, these four locations hold the load start address (the first two bits - low byte/hi byte format), the bank number for the load (third bit), and the number of blocks to be loaded into memory.

5) Now, following the above information, we may find ASCII text terminated with a zero byte. This is printed to screen on the same line as the "BOOTING" message and may be the program name, a SYS address, or any other information you may like to present to the end user. Alternatively, you could leave out any text completely by simply inserting the zero byte at the end of the load data.

6) After the end-of-text indicator (that last zero byte discussed above), there may be still more ASCII text, once again followed by a zero byte. The operative word here is "may", as you can have a second zero byte and no extra text if this text is not desired. This text is taken as the file name by the computer, and will be prefixed with a "0:" (for drive 0). Our machine will now perform a BLOAD of that particular file. An interesting aside is that this particular feature is not implemented on disks set up using one of the many auto-boot makers around, even though the disks load and run a BASIC program named by the user.

7) But there's more! (starting to sound like Tim "Notso" Shaw of Demtel fame!). Next we find M.L. This may be no more than a hex 60, or RTS command, which will return you to BASIC.

Now, this is all very well, but we can do a hell of a lot more than just achieve a standard boot. Let's throw a few things around a bit and see what we can come up with!

Well, for a start, we could install an ML program entirely within track #1, sector #0, and have it run immediately on boot-up. This can easily be achieved by following the initial "CBM" character pattern with six zero bytes, made up of four zero bytes to indicate

that no boot blocks are to be accessed, a fifth to indicate the lack of a message to be printed after the "BOOTING" text, and the sixth telling the computer that no load is to be performed (no filename indicated). This is then followed by the actual machine code, which should engage instantly upon system boot-up (if the disk is in the active drive, of course!).

Another possibility is to install a machine code program as indicated above, but with an RTS (hex 60) located at the beginning of your code. In this instance, when you boot your system, it will return to BASIC, leaving you to engage the memory-resident program with a simple SYS command.

Taking things still further, how about installing something a little larger? Our code could start on track #1, and spread out from sector 0 through sectors #1, #2, #3, etc. and even on to the second and third tracks (or further still). You will need to set the four bytes behind the "CBM" to achieve this, though.

Heck, you could even choose to BLOAD a selected program from your disk by simply inserting the desired programs name in the correct location (before the last zero). Of course, your program wont RUN automatically, but if this is desired, a small M.L. routine following on should achieve the results you require.

This ability to autoboot and execute ML has tremendous potential. Just imagine what you could achieve with a little forethought. Simple things, like setting your system up with the screen colours you desire on boot-up, or perhaps your own personalised BASIC screen text instead of Commodore's. Something like "Bill's BASIC 7.0", eh?

Of course, we can do a little bit more than that. How about an instant disk directory, or setting your F-key definitions.

The potential is limited only by your imagination and knowledge.

This all sounds very well reading this article, but there are some drawbacks

for some of us. Many do not understand M.L. for a start, nor do they feel comfortable manipulating data directly on disk. My advice is "have a go", its not that hard, but DO give yourself time, and do read as much as you can on machine code. Play around with a "scratch" disk or two, or format a new disk, save a few programs to it, and use an Auto-boot maker to put an autoboot on it. There are numerous disk editors around, and it doesn't really matter whether your using your machine in 64 or 128 mode if you haven't got a 128 mode editor. The only proviso is that it may pay to format your disk in 1541 mode if you use a 1571 if you intend using a 64 mode editor.

If you are comfortable with the concept of working directly with your disks, and are willing to play around a little, bear in mind that command strings must follow the following criteria:

- a) They must be less than a BASIC line in length
- b) They must contain only ONE logical line (no CHR\$(13)'s)
- c) All statements must be in immediate mode (no INPUT, GET, etc.)

Have fun!

128 Tips

Just a few little hints I've come across, this first one quite recently.

Easy Loading

Say you've just completed that program you've been working on for oh-so-long and are preparing to save it. Use this method:

```
DSAVE "0:programname
<SHIFT><SPACE>
```

There, that wasn't so hard, was it? If you list your directory now, it will show up just like any other program file, with the shifted space showing in the directory display as the closing quote. OK, OK, I can hear you all muttering away out there. Hardly awe inspiring stuff, eh! Well hang on a sec.,

there's more, believe me! Try cursoring up to our new directory entry. Are you on the same line? Good! Now press F-2 <RETURN>. If all is well, we are now loading our program. Clever little goose, aren't I?

Naturally, you can use the rename command to change any existing files to this format also. Ain't life grand!

Easy Loading #2

Well, apparently not grand enough! If you thought the above tip made life easier, heres another of similar ilk. Use <SHIFT>@ instead of <SHIFT><SPACE>, and use the F-6 key to load.

Warren Nassmith

Boot CP/M

Just finished a session on your 128 in its native mode and want to switch to CP/M? Well, don't worry about touching the reset or power switches, just insert your CP/M disk into the drive and hit the <CONTROL> and <ENTER> (on the numeric keypad - NOT <RETURN>) keys at the same time. If you've forgotten to insert your CP/M disk, this will cause the system to reboot to BASIC.

CN

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Hi, folks and welcome to another months "Letter's Link". Some interesting items this month, so I'll let you get on with it.

GEOS PRINTER PROBLEMS

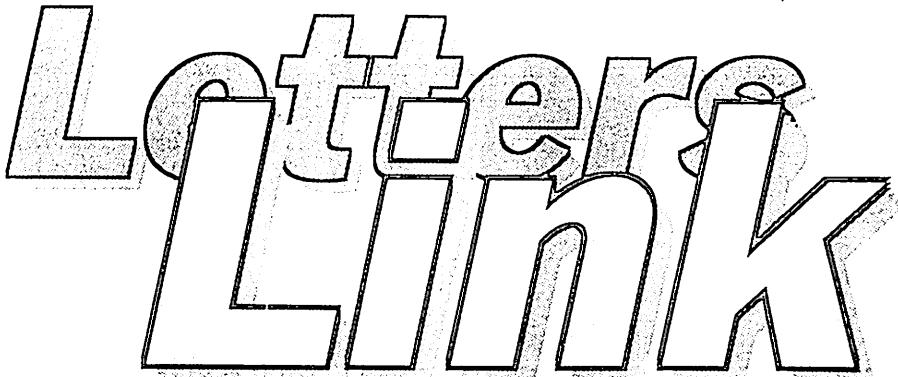
First off, a letter from Dr Brian Thomas of St Georges, South Australia:

I have a 'Super 5 EN-P1090' Printer, and I am having trouble getting 80dpi from the printer using GEOS128v2 on a C128D. After setting the Super Graphics Jnr interface to transparent mode (dip switches 3 and 4 ON), only the Epson MX-80 driver would work but produces only 60dpi. With the same settings, but switching to the Epson RED driver, the result is a 'miniature' [reduction] of a full page, but the result is too small to be used.

For example, when printing out Cards from 'The Card Art Series 2' [purchased from JMV Grafix], the cards are much too small using the Epson RED driver. The 60dpi from the Epson MX-80 driver was also not satisfactory in this instance, printing only part of the geoPaint file, and again the card could not be used.

I was wondering whether any of your readers may be able to shed some light on this problem, and I would appreciate any help I could get in this area. Thanking you in advance.

OK, folks, I'll need your help here. I dont know the printer, so I cant help the good doctor. Can anyone else?



Customer Service/PPI/1351 Mouse

Now, from Les Fletcher of Doonside, N.S.W. comes this tome:

An update on the problem I was having with Novo Computer Hardware. I eventually got my BBU, with a note from Terry to the effect that the first one must have gone astray. However this led to some further questions (maybe I'm just suspicious). In the first place, I received no enquiry from Australia Post, as had happened in the past when mail went astray. Secondly Terry sent me a photocopy of the original invoice, with a note on the bottom giving the new date of dispatch. This begged the question ""if the original went astray, how was he able to send me a photocopy?".

Anyhow, I got my BBU. It didn't work quite in the way stated in the manual and the utility program included didn't work. I wrote to Terry, explaining what was happening. He replied, on a photocopy of my letter saying everything seemed normal and not to worry about the utility disk not

working.

Well, I sent off the warranty registration to PPI, in the US and included a note with the same queries. a couple of weeks later I got a three page reply to my letter, fully explaining the setup and with it a new copy of the utility disk, which includes another utility as well, which is called "Swap RBOOT", or similar and is supposed to help when RBOOTing to get drive C back on desktop. I haven't tried it yet.

I was really impressed by the support given by PPI.

Thirdly, I noticed in Micro-Mart last month that you wanted a 1351 Mouse. I was recently in contact with "Compu-Aid Pty Ltd.", 3-38 South St., Rydalmer, N.S.W., 2116. At that time they had several 1351 Mouses (Mice?) in stock. The asking price was \$55.00. If you are still looking for one, you might try contacting them, if you think the price is not too steep.

Unfortunately, Terry and Novo are getting a bit of a bad reputation for their customer service. In their defence, of course, it MUST be realised that Terry cannot hope to have the

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expertise of the actual company from which he buys and imports his goods, therefore, that company (in this case PPI) is always going to be the best choice when seeking after-sales support. That being said, I do feel that Novo still could have done better than reported, even if it was only to write to PPI and seek further information.

As for the photocopied invoice, having not seen it I cannot comment except to say that Commodore Network works on a three copy invoice system, with one copy going to the customer, one into records, and the third to dispatch. It is possible that this may well be a photocopy of a carbon-copy of the original. Hopefully, I will be able to include a response from Terry in this or next months column.

Thanks for the info on the Mouse. I will contact the company concerned and see what we can arrange. I was actually looking at importing a 1351 mouse clone from Germany for resale here, but the price we would need to ask would be considerably dearer than this (around \$79.00 each). I will also see what other items this firm can supply for us Commodore 8-bit users and keep all informed.

My Cursor Dribbles During SX

OK, over to Western Australia, where Gareth Gorman of East Fremantle writes:

I am using a C64 SX "portable" at the office, with an additional 1541 drive, an M3 Mouse, and exclusively with GEOS and Gateway.

I have, for some time, experienced an annoying problem with the cursor in that it flickers constantly and "dribbles" (sounds like the Editor on a good day!) down the screen when not being moved around by the mouse. With the five inch screen of the SX and the flickering, I find I am becoming myopic and grumpy at a very young age.

Is there a technical type out there who may be able to advise what to replace or kick in order to prevent the problem? A technical type colleague suggests that it may be the 6526 chip or the sound chip interfering with the program but he is not sure and I don't want the machine out of action for too long whilst a local repairer fiddles and experiments with it.

OK, all you "technical types", lets hear from you on this one!

Congratulations!

Back to New South Wales, and Dave Saville of Lansdowne writes:

Just a short note, firstly to congratulate you on the magazine. I only wish I had known about it when it first started.

I was stunned by the presentation (I was actually expecting a photocopied, roughly printed mag similar to Commodore Voice), the content, especially the amount of space given over to the C128, and it's SO EASY TO READ. I gather that you don't use a Commodore 8-bit to produce it. If you do, please tell us the secret.

Once more, congratulations on the magazine. You have at least one subscriber for life.

Many thanks, Dave. It's nice to receive a bit of kudos every now and then. Just for your (and everyone else's) information, Commodore Network is edited on a 128 and laid out using a PC clone. We do it this way for one primary reason. This is that Artie puts the magazine together using PC-GEOS so that we have direct access to a 600dpi laser printer put at our disposal by Black Cabs Combined of Melbourne thus enabling us to get the print quality that gives C.N. its "professional" look.

Equipped with a printer of sufficient quality and with a suitable printer-driver, the average Commodore user can produce some startling results. All you have to do is look at some of the flyers you find inserted in each issue. Those that are produced "in house" (the vast majority), are produced on my 128 hooked up to a Panasonic KX-P4410 300dpi laser printer. Ideally, I would have liked to have C.N. produced entirely with Commodore 8-bits, but I am struggling to keep up with the workload I already have, and, much as I'm sure Artie would appreciate it, we are in no position to buy him a suitable laser.

When I get a little time to spare, and can do a little extra research, I will be presenting an article on the utilisation of laser printers in conjunction with the C64/128 within Commodore Network, so hopefully that will be something to look forward to. It will probably be part of a two or three article "suite" spread over several issues and dealing with printers, and which type suits your requirements in general.

As for being a new subscriber, well that doesn't necessarily mean you have to miss out on earlier issues. All back-issues are still available at \$3.50 each.

Game Repairs

Still in N.S.W., and Gordon Screen of Edgeworth writes:

I have an original of "Summer Games" which has some corruption problems and was wondering if there was

anybody who can repair it?

Well, Gordon, you may be in luck! Commodore Network Helpliner, the delectable Doreen Horne will gladly have a look at your disk and see what she can do for you. Doreen's contact address and phone number should be elsewhere in this issue, but to save you looking, here it is again: Doreen Horne, 70 Fursden Rd., Carina, Qld., 4152, Ph: (07) 398 7441.

I Dream of Genie!

From Warrnambool in Victoria, and Jane Petrie writes:

I have been thoroughly enjoying Jane Jones' new look GEOS column of late. It's good to see that we women are capable of holding our own with the best of the men. However, one thing annoys me! In the column logo, it looks remarkably like Jane has a beard - surely that should be a female Genie.

Actually, a female genie would be a good idea. The only problems I can see are that, if we modelled it on Jane (Jones - this could get confusing!), then people could think we were depicting Barbara Eden ("I Dream of Genie" fame), and I doubt if Jane would pose for me in those skimpy veils (unfortunately!). Seriously, though, I like the idea. However, I leave this sort of thing in Jane's hands, so it's up to her (this is called "passing the buck").

Staples?

Still in Victoria, and David Wolfe writes:

Is it really necessary for the staples to be put in C.N.? It doesn't really bug me . . . I mean it only takes a couple of seconds to rip the offending bits of wire out . . . just a slight annoyance!

I wonder what other people think?

We do get considerable negative feedback on stapling. They are a pain at this end, and obviously a pain at your end. If someone would like to donate a binding system of some (other) sort to us, we'd gladly take it. In the mean time, though, we may well look at discontinuing this practise in future editions. Let's hear what the rest of you have to say!

Continued on Page 26



Power Drift

Power Drift has been missing for a couple of months, and due to some bad luck with a receiving station Hard Disk Drive, we lost a copy of the August column at the last minute. With this in mind, this month we present a combination of Andrew's August & September column as the October column....

Mmmm... morning all. I think I'll have to apologise right about now for an issue that was minus The Power Drift a couple of months back. It was my fault entirely - a combination of being as tardy as I usually am and an unexpected honour (and stress!) that caught me (surprise, surprise...) completely off guard.

The problem was that I was appointed captain of the SA Debating Team and was dumped in Melbourne for the National Championships before I could say, "Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen". And whilst it was an exciting and enjoyable two week period, my beloved column was one of the things left behind in the hurry to prepare.

This particular column is (perhaps in a guilty fashion) being written well ahead of the deadline - check the skies for a blue moon - but I don't really know when it'll be slotted into the mag. So apologies again if I don't seem to know what month it is. However, if any of our fellow readers from across the Tasman in New Zealand pick this up before the World Debating Championships are over, then come along and give me some company and good luck in the Australian camp.

Of course, the rest of you don't have to miss out! Keep your eyes glued to the TV at the prime time of 7 (yes, SEVEN) am (yes, AM) on Saturday and Sunday mornings - Channel 10, of course - and you may even catch a glimpse of the SA team. Then again, maybe not. But what has all this arrogance to do with games? Nothing! You're right. On to the column.

BETTER LATE THAN...

I know it must seem a while ago that I promised a review of Heath Kirby Miller's "Mega Games Pack" (MGP seems an appropriate abbreviation to use) in an up and coming issue. Well, always a man of my (belated) word, I'd just like to say that our ever efficient adventurer has done an excellent job with this value-for-money pack which undoubtedly reflects the rest of his catalogue over at Alternative Software. Oh yeah - the name has nothing to do with the music. Thought I'd better add that in. But it's just as good in the computer world as in that of sound!

Heath has, in a fit of overwhelming and possibly insane generosity, passed along a copy to me for the purpose of a review. However, I've been in a tolerant and kind (and sheepish) mood recently, so I have in turn decided to put it up for grabs. So read on carefully - there could be a prize at the end if you all pay attention.

THE MEGA GAMES PACK

Heath's original advertising spiel went something along the lines of "The programs included in this pack may not occupy many disk blocks each but their entertainment value is high." Hey - you said it, pal. I have been neglecting work, family, food, drink, religion ever since I put in the first disk. There are over a hundred different games jammed onto three disks worth their weight in gold if you're looking for a genuinely good time and a little fun on the side. And aren't we all?

I was silly enough to try to sample every single game in an afternoon. Bad move.

After thirty minutes, I had to force the sweat-drenched joystick from my ragged and bleeding fingers and reluctantly turn the computer off. One down, a hundred and four to go. Eventually, after a number of similar experiences, I found myself at the end of the sixth disk side and much the better for it.

In an effort to present this little plug in the best possible way (17 points for method?) I think I'll split up the games into the categories that will attract your attention. Fair 'nuff? OK - let's go.

SHOOT 'EM UPS

Hehe...now just could this category go unnoticed by any gamer? If you have a legitimate reason, write on in and tell me! There are bang-bang games galore within the MGP, so if you fancy the odd pot-shot at your neighbour's kids when they clamber over the fence in search of a lost ball, then your money is well spent already. Perhaps my favourite is the very first game on the first side of the first disk - that's right, the one I was talking about before. Named Cloudstrike, it has a simple but logical plot centred upon the ship you fly around the screen in your efforts to

destroy the converging nasties whilst collecting enough parachutists to move up a level.

Of course, if you get bored in a hurry then there are plenty of others ready to be tested. Gunfighter springs to mind, and Meteor Storm is well worth a look.

Virtually every mainstream genre is represented within the pack in one way or another, for better or for worse. You should be able to come back to each one after a period of rest and find it just as exciting and challenging second time round.

SPORTS

Yes, yes, I do realise that there are some of you out there that play sports

Andrew Goramly

other than The World's Game, and you should be more happy with what Heath has dished up. For the bowlers amongst us, there are Bowling 2 and Skill Bowling - I'd probably recommend the former, but try them both - as well as Pro Football and Football 64 to cater for the fans of that code. Basketballers have Airwalk Basket... is the name a hangover from the Jordan era? There's even Baseball 64 so that all of our readers in the US can see that we Australians aren't the Philistines you may take us for.

Naturally, those who enjoy less contact sports can take a look at a game simply entitled "Golf" which whilst not a patch on Leaderboard I still found entertaining (now that's an admission from a soccer player). And of course, no collection would be complete without the essential Horse Racing game - and that's exactly what it is. So, ladies and gentlemen, it should be perfectly obvious to you by now that virtually all of the mainstream sports have been considered and are represented here. I STILL think there should be a game called "Soccer" there though...

PETROLHEADS: HERE!

Now I just know that some of you were waiting with deliberate anticipation for this section, weren't you? If you happen to have a head filled with fumes or your

battery never runs flat (hmmm... the humour's getting worse than that on the news <groan>) then you certainly won't be disappointed. The classic styles in Krazy Kars and Dragster are supported by games such as Speed Racer and Car Race to give you all of the carbon dioxide rush you could ever want.

Tank Defender on the fourth side provides an interesting view of life during rush hour - it might go down well if you run out and watch Speed beforehand - and Acceleration is another to have a look at, located on the first side of the third disk. On the whole, whilst there aren't any that stand out as rivals to F1GP, anyone who enjoys a good automobile game can rest assured that there are plenty here.

STRATEGY GAMES

You will really have a feast here, strategists. More thinking games than you can poke a broken broom at, and then more after those. Whether you enjoy mazes, in which case the old favourite Maze Mania is definitely the go, or simply living underwater for three months on end and inviting those on the surface to join you - read: you'll like U-Boat 26 - then you'll spend hours on end with the MGP. There are some of the reflex-orientated strategy games here too - Tron, or Tronic Cycle as it's called here, is the first that I'm reminded of when looking at the list. Trains, similarly, requires a quick mind and good hand-eye coordination too.

There are too many to list here with consideration to space in such an exclusive publication. Suffice it to say that if you're the port-drinking type I vaguely remember referring to last month - or was it the month before? - then you'll have your money's worth and more from Heath's little deal.

STAR TREK



Well, you know, just to rope in a few more gamers I thought I'd better mention it. Is every Trekkie out there listening? Good. I'd just like to mention the fact that the very last game on the final side in the set happens to be called Star Trek. Oh, and there's also a game on the flip side entitled Super StarTrek. Mmmm....

Of course, there are tens of games which I haven't mentioned here. Heath has done a superb job in selecting roughly the correct proportion of games to keep everyone happy and secure in the knowledge that their money is well spent. The price for this delectable collection? \$10.

That's right, a mere tenner will buy you all the fun I've mentioned and more.

So what are you waiting for? The Mega Games Pack will be available to the general public for the next two months, at the bargain basement price of a single note (and a relatively small denomination one at that).

There should be an advertisement for Alternative Software in this issue, but

just for some reinforcement I'll give it here: RMB 221 Sunraysia Hwy Stuart Mill Victoria 3478. Write to Heath for further information on the list of games, if you like, and I'm sure he'll be happy to pass it on.

COMPETITION

Yep, another one. Simple prize - one Mega Games Pack, free of charge. I'll even post it to you should you win. Simple entry method - send in the answer to the following question along with your name and address, and anything else you might like to add while you are at it such as a high score or a poke request - I mean, you might as well tack it on the bottom - to my address which you all know so well by now: PO Box 123 Walkerville SA 5081. Simple question too... What is the name of the first game on the first side of the first disk?

As was mentioned on the front page back in May, the European gaming houses are working their dear little hearts out to keep those titles rolling on out. U.S. Gold are preparing to release the conversion of Sonic the Hedgehog, a popular game from the consoles, which should have similar success on the C64 if it's up to Goldie's old standards. Just for some hype, it should be remembered that the American giants brought us the SSI series of D&D games, as well as shoot'em ups such as Strider and 1943 (I always preferred it to the original). If Sonic's up to scratch, we can only drool!

Also, I'd like you all to welcome back Konami. <applause> After the high standard set by Batman, the sequel will be tough to push, but all things being equal I'll stick by the company and predict that this one WILL be good. Australian release? We'll find out.

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POKES

Now, you're looking for a little poking, aren't you? If so, great. If not, why not? Get into it! There's nothing better than a good poke now and then. So here are a few shorties to keep everybody happy...

Terra Cognita: Unlimited lives - POKE 26703,255 & SYS 24576 Jeep Command: Unlimited lives - POKE 32627,241 & SYS 16384 Quintic Warrior: Unlimited lives - POKE 8547,173 & SYS 8233 Lazy Jones: Unlimited lives - POKE 4063,173 & SYS 2061 Haunted House: Unlimited lives - POKE 7609,234 & SYS 9500 However, methinks I'm getting a little bored of dishing out these one-liners every month. I feel like such an underachiever. So just for this month, I think I might delve into some more complex listings and written hints which can enable you to beat the ugly monsters at their own game. For a nice and easy one to begin with, how about that most legendary game, R-Type?

R-TYPE

This one's for tape only, however, so if you have the tape then half your luck, but if you don't then you'll have to back up your disc version onto a tape in order to utilise the cheat. All you have to do is type in the listing below, run it, and then whack in the tape and press play. What could be easier - apart from wasting all your pay on computer games, that is?

```
1 FOR I=384 TO 412: HEAD A: POKE I, A: NEXT  
2 SYS384  
3 DATA 32,86,245,169,114,141,110,8,169  
4 DATA 1,141,111,8,76,14,8,169,173,141,157,50  
5 DATA 169,96,141,156,49,76,18,8
```

Not being the most adept coder, I can only hope that it all comes out OK. Keith over in the Basic section will probably give me a call to abuse me because it's all wrong, but that should do for you R-Type fans.

Bah! Now I've gone and lost the other listing that was supposed to come in here - nevermind, there's too little time to go back and change everything. Hey! Remember that ol' fav by the name of Elite? I collected a few pointers from a former master the other day, so if you happen to see a copy lying around your friend's place and it happens to crawl into your pocket or bag when you're just about to leave (don't you just HATE it when that happens?!), then you're going to need a couple of bits of inside information to get started. Or maybe you've just never worked out how to get anywhere since you first bought it back in the good ol' days. Who cares?

Well, I don't - but you should! Heed the following advice!

ELITE

To begin with, buy a load of furs at Lave and head off to Leesti. Sell these for a little cash, and then prepare yourself for a number of trade runs between Leesti and Diso. Food or furs are your best bet. The pirate attacks are few and far between, and generally of such small magnitude that you should be able to defend yourself even with that water pistol that calls itself a pulse laser.

Don't forget to save regularly, however (you'd think those nasty people who actually do well at these games consider us dumb, wouldn't you?).

Once the credits are starting pile up, the first thing on your shopping list should be a large cargo bay. Yes, I know it's tempting to splurge once the bank balance is looking healthy and end the monotony of the milk run, but for your own sakes, resist! Not much longer. The addition will make your trade route far more cost effective.

Now, we might just let you spend a little on leisure equipment. Just a little, mind you.

AFTER your cargo bay (remember that, you trigger-happy maniacs), a beam laser is a nice addition. It means that the pirates will have something harder to run into when they foolishly try to exploit your nice little earner.

An ECM System will definitely come in handy and really should be next on the list. Forget about missile attacks from now on - all modern vehicles should have one of these. Wonder if O.J. Simpson did?

A docking computer is useful if not essential, although I personally think that it's the most essential piece of machinery after you've docked three or four million times manually. Then, the extra energy unit will ensure that your ship's battery will never go flat - even if you are silly enough to leave the lights on when dropping in on the Vogons.

Finally, you're given leave to go blast anything you like as soon as you get your hands on the finest piece of modern technology: the C65... no, sorry, the military laser. This little beastie will mean that at last you can tear off to the nearest Anarchy planet and take on as many or as vicious pirates as you like (within reason, the source says to add) knowing full well that their buccaneering days are at an end.

Of course, to accomplish this you need not only good weaponry but also good tactics. Once the enemy is sighted, slow to about 25% of normal speed to increase your manoeuvrability (now

THAT'S a l-o-n-g word...wow...). Remember, the main advantage which they have over your Cobra is their ability to duck and dive. About a quarter speed should decrease the deficit somewhat.

Pirates aren't as dumb as they're made out to be - who knows, it could've been Captain Blackbeard F.R.C.S for all we've been told - as they converge in groups and in a hurry. Don't dawdle, as you can usually pick a couple off whilst they're still specks on the horizon. Once the fight is on, don't use missiles unless there are five or six opponents, and don't bother on ships with ECMs for a follow-up shot. The energy bomb is definitely a last resort, and never forget that it's worth little more than a plausible fireworks show on a Thargoid.

General tactics in combat are best picked up through experience, but remember not to follow enemies as they fly across your screen from one side to the other, as all you end up doing is flying in circles. The best way to pick off a nimble adversary is to have a laser on each side and another at the back so that all you ever have to do is change screen to keep firing.

Promotion is always in the back of the mind when playing Elite, as "mostly harmless" is never a good reference term for an accomplished pilot such as oneself (OK, so I've lost the humility bit now). Naturally, flirting in the anarchical zones tends to improve your number of kills and rating respectively, but a cheekier way of accomplishing this end is to sit directly outside the entrance of a spinning space station and fire into the gaping eyesore. In a few moments, the annoyed flotilla of police craft is launched directly into your crosshairs. Keep your finger on the button and bang - they're dead. The law won't like it, but you'll be respected by everyone else!

Some final tips from our friendly Elite expert: smuggling contraband can be an interesting (and indeed profitable) way to play the game, but you'd be wise to keep such activities to a minimum as the Laws of Supply and Demand apply here as they do everywhere... isn't that just what the Government are telling us these days? It's a shame the Federation won't subsidise it in the game. Oh, and never forget to keep a full fuel load whenever possible - you never know when a quick hyperspace jump is going to be needed!

OK, thank you Stephen! (He's a dentist, so I can't show you his REAL name in print)

Hmmm...bad news and good news. Bad news: running out of space (and

time, for that matter, not to mention energy, and money, and coffee). Good news: I've just found that listing again! You want to see it, don't you? Sure you do! This one I know works on a disk, but I'm not sure about tape, because I wasn't able to test it before date of submission (read: date of execution if Warren has anything to do with it). The game? Why, Stunt Car Racer, of course!

STUNT CAR RACER

Type in the listing, run it, and do exactly as it tells you, because it will tell you only once. Once this is done, you should (hopefully) be able to drive around the track safe in the knowledge that your afterburner well shall never run dry.

```
0 IFA=1 THEN23
1 PRINTCHR$(147)
2 FORI=49152 TO 49237:READAS
3 L=ASC(LEFT$(AS,1)):L=L-55:IFL<5THENL=L+7
4 R=ASC(RIGHT$(AS,1)):R=R-55:IFR<5THENR=R+7
5 V=(L*16)+R:C=C+V:POKEI,V:NEXT
6 IFC<>>8190THEN PRINT"DATA ERROR!":END
7 PRINT"INSERT STUNT CAR RACER DISK THEN
PRESS ANY KEY"
8 POKE198,0:WAIT 198,1:POKE 198,0
9 DATA 78,A9,0F,8D,14,03,A9,C0,8D,15
10 DATA 03,58,4C,30,03,A9,1C,8D,93,10
11 DATA A9,C0,8D,94,10,4C,31,EA,A9,29
12 DATA A9,C0,8D,94,10,4C,31,EA,A9,29
13 DATA 8D,67,03,A9,C0,8D,68,03,4C,30
14 DATA 03,A9,D0,8D,0A,05,A2,1A,BD,3C
15 DATA C0,9D,0A,07,CA,10,F7,4C,00,05
16 DATA A9,EE,8D,00,25,A9,03,8D,01,25
17 DATA 4C,00,20,A9,00,8D,34,F6,A9,60
18 DATA 8D,5D,42,4C,17,40,00,00,00,00
21 A=1:OPEN
1,8,15,:PRINT#, "UJ":FORI=1TO1000:NEXTT:CLOSE
1
22 LOAD***,8,1
23 SYS49152
```

So, was that fun? I hope it was as good for you as it was for me...

THE END...

Yes, it's that sad time once again. Is anyone going to call me back from the brink? Maybe. An eternity of painlessness doesn't sound like such a bad idea - but that's a personal whinge. I hope that I helped out a few of you Elitists and Stunt Car Racers today, and maybe even a few Jeep Commanders and Quintec Warriors too.

I must extend my sincere thanks to Heath (Kirby Miller, of Venturing Inn and Alternative Software fame) for sending me that very well-received copy of his Mega Games Pack from which I'm finding it difficult to tear myself away.

Cheers
Andrew
CN

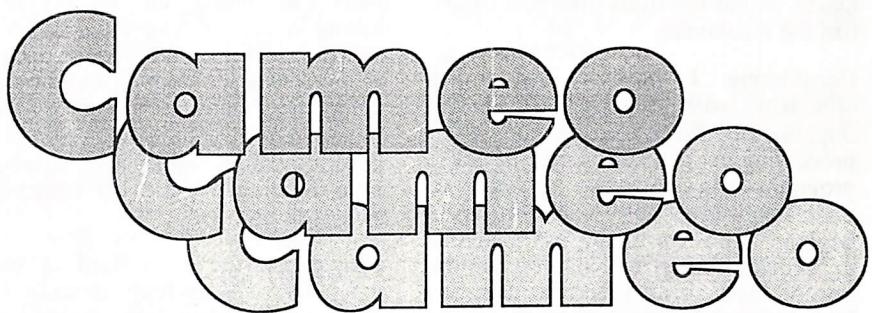
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Introduction from the Editor:

This is a small article submitted by a friend of mine who prefers to be known only as Diane. Diane is an epileptic who suffered minor brain damage as a child due to the intensity of the seizures commensurate with this affliction. Today, some 30 years later, and due to a hell of a lot of hard work by family, friends, and not least of all, Diane herself, she is getting on with her life and has the epilepsy under control. She has now encountered computers for the first time and she'd like to share her thoughts with you all now.

Not having much to do with computers before makes it a challenge to anyone like myself who is just getting involved for the first time. From a beginners point of view, computers are fascinating because they can do so much. I'm not fully equipped with all the terms, just starting out like many of you, and I'm sure you understand. I am finding it difficult to comprehend while it is all still so new to me, and it may take me a while to know what you are talking about and to learn to operate a computer for the first time can be frightening can't it?

I have never had the opportunity to learn about computers before, and Warren makes it all seem so easy that I sometimes feel a little left behind. Having a magazine and support group like Commodore Network that users can turn to for help is great (Ed - see, this girl knows how to get an article published).

Computers need to be programmed to do what you want them to do as they are dumb and need to be told what has to be done. I didn't realise that computers are everywhere and that

they will take over in our homes and in the commercial industries and factories and are used in schools, or that computers will replace men in some areas.

I have been using my computer for six months now, and I am quite enjoying learning what I can do with it and how to get the best out of it. It fills in my nights and days from time to time when there isn't anything else to do, playing games as well as discovering what it is all about and finding it a challenge (and a bit frustrating at times) to learn all about my Commodore. It is a good way to unwind and relax even though I have not got the maximum out of it as yet. I am hoping to change all that when I get a little bit more confidence in what I'm doing, but I think it will take me quite some time to find out what I can do with it and what can't be done.

It can be fun learning all about these wonderful machines and how versatile they can be, but what I like most about computers is that people of all ages can use them right from the children up to the elderly who need to keep their minds active and their fingers moving.

Some people won't try to use a computer as they are frightened of them and think they are difficult to learn to use. I thought the same thing myself until I had a go and I am glad that I did because it taught me not to be afraid of them. Look at me now, trying to write an article about it from my point of view as a beginner.

Having learnt how to use a computer has made a big difference to me as it has changed my life in some small way and I can appreciate the changes it has made. It has given me a new skill that I

never imagined I'd use, but surprisingly it is used every day. It has also improved my typing skills to a large extent within the short time that I have had the machine.

Considering I haven't had much experience with programs like GEOS, Superscript, Easy Script, or word processing in general, some of these programs can be quite difficult to understand, especially when you are a beginner who has to rely on someone to explain things to you. It can be torture, and sheer bloody frustration and tears and laughter when you make mistake and you know that you can do better. Not knowing a good deal about computers leaves me in the dark, but I find I can change my way of thinking by being a little bit more positive and by knowing that it can be done. Using computers has given me a new direction, and is teaching me how to communicate with people in all walks of life. Not only that, but it has given me a little bit more freedom.

I have a basic understanding of how to work my machine but that is as far as my knowledge goes for the time being. I sometimes forget the simplest things and spend hours on the keyboard, just to learn it all over again. I do that for several days or even a week, but I figure it out in the long run and it finally sticks, which may have happened to most of you when you were starting out.

Trying to complete something, to me, is an achievement in itself as I have difficulty at times concentrating on and finishing things, so I guess you all run into that occasionally. I sometimes think I know it all about computers when I really know nothing whatsoever, and I try to pull myself up, and tell myself to listen to what I am told. That often keeps me in line. Knowing that I can learn all I need to know about computers from the beginning, and rebuilding some confidence that has been lost by me.

I have done a little bit of reading on

computers, some of it has sunk in, but a lot of it didn't because I didn't know the terms and what they actually meant. Now I'm finding out for myself by asking a lot of questions and when shown how things are done it does not seem to take me as long to learn what to do, and therefore it cuts down on time taken up with various things that have to be done within a set amount of time. Finding ways to cut corners can save a lot of time.

People ask me is it hard to use a computer, and my reply is no, it's not all that difficult to learn. Sometimes I wonder why I didn't get one sooner, I now realise that so much can be done with them.

I am no longer afraid of computers and the way they work. I know they have to be maintained and kept in working order so that they can serve you well because they last for years on end. Thinking back over the last six months of owning and using a Commodore, it seems it has given me many hours of pleasure. It takes pride of place on my desk in my office, and time seems to fly by when it's in use.

I help Warren out part-time, and he's forever stirring me. It's quite annoying at times when I am busy concentrating on some task he has given me, and he comes along and distracts me, giving me a little of cheek and telling me to get back to work "slacko". I then lose my place and I tell him off for giving me a hard time. And quite often the phone rings when I am trying to get things finished and tidied up before I forget to do it, so that I can come back to it later on in the day. But working alongside Warren in Commodore Network has meant so much to me. It has given me confidence in myself. Warren treats me like an equal, he doesn't talk down to me, and he doesn't pull punches when I do things wrong. what he does do, is take the time to tell me what I've done, and to allow me to solve the problems myself with a little bit of prompting.

When I am working on something I try to take my time with it so that I don't rush it and make mistakes. I don't like starting all over again, but if it helps then that's what has to be done. At times my work can be quite good, and at other times it can be quite bad. It gets me angry to think that all the hard work that has been put in has been wasted., but it seems that I have learnt something about myself by doing things better than I am given credit for being capable of by others, and maybe in time I will improve a lot more. Let's hope so for my sake

All of these things take time to learn when you don't have a bloody clue (Ed - tch, tch, language!) what you are doing!

My involvement with computer's started when I was offered the opportunity to work and learn something new within Commodore Network. I decided that I would give it a go because it gave me a chance to forget my disability so that I could feel useful as well as needed, and I'm glad that someone out there gave me a chance to find out what it is like to work in a business environment.

Computers are a real eye opener, with the many uses they are put to. The mind boggles to think how there are computer's everywhere, so I feel anything I can learn is a change for the better. Since working with Warren, I have learnt to use GEOS for writing and drawing, to use Superbase 128 to keep track of data, and to use Superscript 128 at work and EasyScript at home for text. I sometimes get the commands mixed up, but Warren is always patient, and though he may stir me, I know he's only trying to make me laugh, the rat!, and relieve the tension I feel when I make a mistake. In the early days I used to cry a lot when things went wrong, now I laugh at myself and work out my error. It's good to know that I'm not that much different from anyone else!



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Showcase

GEOS in Review

Now, I've had "GEOS in Review" to hand for some time now, and if I don't review it soon, Jane's gunna insist on reviewing ALL the GEOS goodies I receive . . . what's that? She does already? Well, I . . . hmpf!

Oh, well, I suppose I've started it so I may as well do the job while I'm here, otherwise Jane could loose her patience . . . and if you've ever seen an angry genie, especially a geoGenie, you'd know why I think I'll do the job now! (grin).

All stirring aside, lets have a serious look at one of Jane's latest works.

I don't know about you ugly, unshaven, unkempt lot out there, er, sorry, that's the mirror, thought it was a window for a moment, but I've often wanted more information on what is available out there in the world of GEOS. There are numerous excellent programs around, and there is also a goodly share of "bummers!", which is which? How do you separate the chaff from the wheat (or corn if your American).

Well, though this publication is not the be-all and end-all, it does give the GEOS user an excellent guide to what's out there. It talks about some of the best P.D., shareware, and commercial offerings currently available for the operating system, and guides the potential user through the actual use of each, and provides a good background on the potentialities of the software being studied.

To be quite frank, I don't really know how I'm going to handle this review. How do you review reviews? I can't really go through each chapter, describing them in depth, can I. That

would telegraph Jane's punches. What I will do is try and talk in generalities, without getting into specifics if I can.

The HandBook contains chapters on NewTools 2, GeoCanvas v1.2, GEOS LQ "The Perfect Print", The "Dweezil" disks from Quincy Softworks, Collette Utilities, Jane's own Clip Art (review written by Glenys Price), The HandyScanner64 and PageFox Cartridge, Photo Mover, GeoCanvas v3.0, and GeoMakeBoot.

Jane has approached each of these in turn, explaining them in clear and concise terms, and taking the reader through their operation whilst pointing out each ones potentialities and abilities. As is typical of Jane's style, she doesn't overwhelm the reader with "techno-speak", but rather takes a more "person-to-person" approach, talking straight, understandable, English, and spending time covering each and every facet of a programs operation in just that little bit more depth than one would normally be able to do.

This approach leads the reader on a comfortable stroll through each program reviewed, pointing out highlights (and lowlights) of each product in turn, and enabling the reader to make a more educated decision should the time arise that one of these programs is being put under consideration as a potential purchase.

But this booklet is much more than just an unpaid advertisement for each product in turn. It contains much more information as well. Scattered throughout the publication we find sections labeled "GeoQuery", these are common questions asked by people Jane has come into contact with over

the years, along with the answers as Jane supplied them. There is a wealth of information found amongst these, ranging from pasting text scraps in GeoPaint to locating and buying a HandyScanner.

Furthermore, for anyone considering the purchase of a HandyScanner, Jane has included a rather good article on scanning procedures which should be an information gold-mine for you.

An extensive bibliography and User Group/Publication listing finishes off this offering.

In Conclusion.

I would have liked to have fleshed this out a bit more, but really, there isn't a great deal more I can say. This is an

Warren Nasomile

extremely handy addition to have in any GEOS library. It is well worth the \$15.00 asked for the 35 or so pages of concentrated information in my opinion. Jane is a very productive lady, and continues to churn out impressive works time after time after time. I sometimes think our roles should be reversed, and she should be editing Commodore Network. Ah well, you never know, perhaps I'll take a holiday one day, and she'll edit a special GEOS edition of C.N. Hmmm! sounds good to me, what say you Jane? I could certainly do with the break!

In short, for the die-hard GEOS fan, this is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!



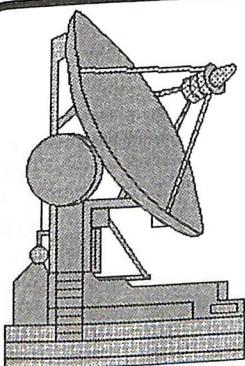
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October 1994 - Commodore Network

Superbase Snippets

Superbase/Superscript Labels

The "labels" program is one that every SUPERBASE/SUPERSCRIPT owner should know about. It not only comes on the main program disk along with the "utility" and "delete" programs, but it can be an inspiration for a whole host of other programs that you can write yourself. It is that easy. All FREE too!

To help you get started, you could send away for the disk offer below, but in the meantime, let's look at these programs.

MAKELABELS

Last issue we discussed the designing of label programs for Superbase. Having designed our "file(s)" to suite our purpose, we then have to load and run the "makelabels" program by typing on MENU1 the words 'load"makelabels"', then pressing F7 to EXECUTE it.

The program will ask for the name of the file to print from. If our file is called "contacts", we will type that. How many labels (1-4) across the page is then displayed. Respond with 2 if your label is 98mm X 38mm. You are then required to enter the label width, which will be 39 if your Superbase parameters are set to lmarg1:rmargin80 (see the Superbase 'start' program). We will set our 'start column' as 2, and the number of lines between labels (2-12) will be nine in this instance. If the information displayed is correct, respond with "Y", otherwise "N", and do it again.

PROMPTS FOR EACH LABEL LINE

For each of the nine lines we will be asked the following:

No. of items on line # (0-4) : #
(Maximum of four items per line).

Type of Field for line # field #: #
(Either t=ext, n=numeric, d=ate, or k=eyboard entry - for most fields, "t" will be preferred).

Enter field name for line # field #: If our field is named [a1], that is what we type (don't forget the square brackets).

If the information displayed is correct, answer "Y", otherwise an "N" will let you do it all again.

SAVING LAYOUT VERSIONS TO DISK

Once you have finished inputting your nine lines, you will be asked to save the layout as l/n (l = last store, eg lstore or n = new store, eg nstore). We will answer 'n' and give it a name: "layout1". We can have as many layouts as we want on disk as long as they are correctly named and/or numbered.

The makelabels program will now load and run the "labels" program, or you could stop now and continue later by typing on MENU1 'load "labels"', and then pressing F7 to again execute.

LABELS PROGRAM

The first thing the "labels" program will ask you is whether you wish to 'Use an existing layout file (y/n)? 'Y''. We will press <RETURN> to accept. The directory (on my improved version) is then displayed to enable the reading of the layout name off the directory list (make no mistake). You are then asked to ENTER the layout filename. We will enter 'layout1' or 'layout2', depending on which version we now want.

SELECT LISTS?

You are then asked 'Use Select list (y/n)? : n'. Press <RETURN> on 'n', otherwise type in the name of the Select list when prompted to do so. Select lists are very useful if you don't want an entire file printed out. I use this, for instance, when I only want to print out one or two names from a file. Before using the Select list option, the Select list has to be found and saved to disk using the FIND option of Superbase. This can automate a lot of work.

WHICH RECORD TO START FROM?

The last option to be asked is: "Start at first record (y/n)? : y". Press <RETURN>, otherwise type in the record number that you wish to begin with when prompted.

HELP!

If everything is correct, you will then be pleased to hear your printer spring in to action printing the list/file. If not, try to find the cause of the mishap before screaming for HELP!. The usual

causes of printer inertia are that field types, fieldnames, and filenames have been confused, or other human error.

ARCHIVE INFORMATION

For those of you who want to store necessary records of amounts owing at the end of each month, the SINGLE COLUMN LABELS program can be used. Actually, the program I have written has a column for the address details, while column two has the particulars of amount owing, etc. If the second column is not needed, the program can produce labels in a SINGLE COLUMN format.

If, however, an archived Superscript/Superbase "datafile" is required which can be listed to screen/printer/disk, then this program

Superbase Enthusiast

will do it and a lot more as well.

The SORT menu has been left in the program, though, if your records have been thoughtfully arranged in the first instance, may not get a great deal of use. Before using this though, the correct fieldnames must be entered into the program.

FINDING LISTS

The 'FIND A SELECT LIST' will do just that, storing the result in the disk file "h8list" unless you alter the program before running it, to give it another name. Having found your list of KEYS, you may want to alter the UP-DATE flag to correspond with the current list. The program allows for that.

SUPERSCRIPT AND A DATAFILE

If you wish to OUTPUT, you will be asked if you want to output, otherwise you are returned to MENU1. If you do wish to output to disk, you are then asked if you wish to view the "datafile" in SUPERSCRIPT. At the end of your reviewing, you may be returned to Superbase for further OUTPUTTING, or you may output the labels file in SUPERSCRIPT where you have the opportunity to add any last-minute comments before re-saving the file or

printing it out.

Back in Superbase, and you are further asked if you want to output from a LIST (a portion of, or the entire file). If you don't wish to continue, press <CONTROL>Q.

SELECT-LIST OUTPUTTING

If you do want a SELECT-LIST, you are further asked from which field the list is to come. It is usually the UD update flag, but it can be from any field in the record. When choosing a field, you must also choose what the CONTENTS are to equal. In the case of the UPDATE flag, it is usually "Y" or "N". You are further asked what NAME you want to call the list. The default name is "h8list". You should choose another name beginning with "h8" if you want the file to remain permanently on disk. This "h8" prefix enables you to view the file with the aid of the HELP key at any time (very convenient). You then decide whether you want the output d=isplayed/p=rinted. Select "d" this first time. If the display checks out correctly, then choose "p", otherwise press <CONTROL>Q and make the necessary corrections before OUTPUTTING. This saves your paper, your money, and your time!

Don't forget to write down the number of records found, if this is important (before it disappears forever). Typing "display x" on MENU1 will return the most recent occurrence.

At the end of the program you are asked if you want to QUIT or RERUN from the beginning.

CONCLUSION

If you are just wanting quick labels, then the multi-label program "makelabels" will probably suit you better. However, if you want to design your own output using all the facilities of SUPERBASE/SUPERSCRIPT, then this little program may in the first instance be of help as a role model. The ability to manipulate the data in Superbase, and then transfer it directly into the wordprocessor to print out the lists in perfect alphabetical order, or utilising different fonts, italics, etc. is really worth exploring, especially as the original programs are so inexpensive.

Even children or older people can become Superbase experts. It can be an interesting, worthwhile, and thrifty pursuit for the disabled and intellectual alike, bent on writing and recording facts and information which can be securely stored on a small floppy disk.

MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

A very useful little program is "serial

renumber". This little program will operate only on a few fields which include the ud[] update field, no[] number field, gp[] group field, count[] counting the number in the file, se[] serial counting of records, m[] membership counting, etc.

If you would like to know more details about this or any other Superscript/Superbase application, then do ask before you pay \$10,000 for your more powerful databases), or if you have a contribution to make, we are all waiting to hear from you.

RELATIONAL DATABASE

Superbase 128 is a relational database only when used that way. It is also inexpensive and completely programmable into modules by almost everyone. Since most people don't know HOW, I've yet to see a novice do it. However, the opportunity for people to learn about SUPERBASE/SUPERSCRIPT through these columns in C.N. is there. All you have to do is pick up a pen or the phone to find out HOW! Since 'lifetime' support is given, what have you got to lose except your own wasted time!

Perhaps the greatest contribution that SUPERBASE/SUPERSCRIPT can make is the EDUCATION of people (the young, the old, the handicapped, the social scientist, the small business person, or the students of today and tomorrow).

But for my part, although I've owned the very latest technology, and will do so again before I die, I know to what little, inexpensive, and most useful computer will continue to interest me, along with the hundreds of programs I've written for it.

RELATIONAL USE

We can best describe the relational use of C128 Superbase by an analogy. Imagine a work table on which there are tools and ideas at work to produce a finished result. With Superbase 128, you see and hear what is happening, and because you are able to access the source code and see what is going on, you are able to alter the instructions to the computer.

But with other platforms, unless you are a computer scientist with several years of specialisation behind you, you couldn't even begin to know the secrets of that system. Because you can't access the source-code, you have to accept what the makers have to say about their product at face value. You have to trust that what you're getting is going to suit your needs. They won't even let you 'buy' it. Instead, you are given a 'site lease' of one copy, and,

believe me, they don't come cheap, so you can't even pull it to bits, and most probably wouldn't be allowed to 'legally' sell it, though many do.

The relational use is where the 'owner' gets the program to do what he wants it to do in the sequence he wants it performed. This relational use is seen to happen on the outside and is not frustrated by the little internal secrets. So, a characteristic of 'relational use' on the outside is to see disk based 'units' that are clearly labelled and arranged in a specific order (alphabetically, numerically, family, etc.), and which are used in a clearly defined set of circumstances.

Other more expensive platforms require the undivided attention of the user because they are so fast that the user might miss a vital clue as to what is going on. Not so with the C64/128 Superbase system. Nearly all its programs can be left to do their thing unsupervised in accordance with the self-programmable instructions for extended periods such as overnight or during your absence at work. It won't argue or complain. The perfect dumb slave.

KEEPING SUPERBASE FOREVER

Superbase is a marvellous and easy to learn basic language. Many thousands of useful programs have been written. But, like us all, if we don't use it, we lose it! And that is what has been happening over the years. People have been moving to other platforms, or dying and taking their secrets, their programs, and their bright ideas, with them.

In order to save what we are able for those just now coming in to the C64/128 world and now learning about Superbase/Superscript, SB-ENTHUSIAST appeals to any interested reader who knows of ANYONE who once had an interest in SUPERBASE, to get that person to contact us at C.N., and to let us know whatever is worth remembering. No matter whether the contribution is small or considerable, we would be glad to hear from you. All information gathered will be compiled into a Superbase compendium of sorts, and will be made available to everyone interested in the subject at a fee to cover reproduction expenses, etc.. Format has not been decided upon as yet, and may consist of hardcopy plus program disks but naturally, this will depend on quantity and quality of the feedback we get. I feel EVERY SERIOUS SUPERBASE/SUPERSCRIPT user should have an interest in the outcome of this project, as the information supplied should be invaluable.



CP/M Corner

By way of introduction:

by Mr. Ed:

For those of you that have been following this as part of the Page 128 column, this is not a new section of our publication. However, a very many of you have had no interest in anything pertaining to the 128 and could well have missed these articles previously. In a fit of editorial decision making, I have decided to present "CP/M Corner" as a stand-alone article in future issues, beginning now. This was done for several reasons, including the fact that a serviceable version of CP/M has been available for 64 users for quite some time, and that the new "Flash-8" system for the C64 comes with, if initial tests are any indication, a quite handy version of this operating system which operates beautifully at the eight megahertz operating speed that this unit supplies. Many of the concepts discussed in this column will be pertinent across the board, whether using CP/M on the C128, with the 64 CP/M cartridge, or indeed with the Flash-8 installed on your 64. Now, over to Alastair, I can see he's eager to get started.

CP/M and NSWP20, Commonly called SWEEP

Sweep has two types of commands. One executes without pressing <RETURN>, and the other must have the question answered and then executes when you press <RETURN>. I will call them DIRECT and INDIRECT. Let us examine the first group of DIRECT commands.

? - Displays the directory of SWEEP commands.

T - Tag a file for mass action. When you tag a file it is marked with an asterisk (*), and after the action it is marked with the number symbol (#).

A - Again or Retag. After a mass action, all files tagged are now marked #, so you can retag using this to get back to the *, ready for more action.

U - Untags the present file. If the file is NOT tagged, this command is ignored.

P - Print the present file. The file must of course be of the type which can be printed and not a COM file.

V - View the file on screen. You can view squeezed files and look in to the

first line of Supercalc files if required.

B - Go back up one file. If sweep is on the first file, B will go to the last file so that you can list the files in reverse alphabetical order.

<SPACE> or <RETURN> - Moves sweep forward one file. Sweep lists files in alphabetical order.

X - Exits to CP/M and the drive and user area from which you called sweep. Now, for the second group of commands.

C - Copy the file to another disk and/or user area. QUESTION: "Copy to (filespec) ?". You type the drive number, user number (and give the file a new name if required), and hit <RETURN>. If you omit the drive and user number, sweep assumes they are unchanged. You can VERIFY the copy by inserting a space after the drive/user number and entering a V.

L - Log to a new disk and/or user area. QUESTION: "New drive/user/mask ?". You type the drive/user area and hit <RETURN>. Also, if you type for example B2:Myfile, you will log on to drive B, User 2, and the cursor will be positioned at "Myfile".



Three great thoroughbreds from the
Commodore Network
stable



Commodore World

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Details on how to subscribe to all three of these great publications on the back page.

S - Check the number of Kbytes free on the drive. QUESTION: "Which Drive ?". Type the drive letter and hit <RETURN>.

F - Find a file. QUESTION: "Find what ?". Type the first letters of the name of the file and <RETURN>. This is a quick way to skip through a list of files. If the file is found, SWEEP moves the cursor to the file. If it is not found, then the cursor stays put.

R - Rename a single file or a list of files. QUESTION: "New name, or * ?". Here you have two choices. ONE, to change the name of the current file, enter the new name and hit <RETURN>. TWO, to change the name of more than one file, or a file other than the current, type * and hit <RETURN>. QUESTION: "Old name ?". Type any file name in the current user area (you can use * ? variables in the name). Example:-*.COM will mark all .COM files for renaming. QUESTION: "New name ?". Now type the new file name and <RETURN> (The variables may be used in the name as previously). You can move files to another user area as well as another drive by entering the user number after the drive letter and separated from the file name with the colon. If you select B:, sweep will display the old name and the new name of all files that are renamed.

W - Wildcard tag of files for mass action. QUESTION: "Tag what ?". You type the file name and use variables * or ? to select a group of files. Example, *.BAK marks all .BAK files. Sweep displays a list of all tagged files and a running total of the size. the total in brackets is the size of the files. The total without brackets is the amount of space you need if copying to another disk. If your system copies in 1K bytes, both totals will be the same, but if your system copies files in 2K bytes, a K will require 2K and a 5K needs 6K of disk space. This is very useful when you want to copy to a disk with limited space remaining.

D - Delete the current file. QUESTION: "Delete file ?". Pressing any key except "Y" will abort. If "Y" is pressed, and your file is READ ONLY, Sweep will advise you and ask the question once again. If you enter "Y" again, Sweep will proceed to delete the file. You can abort at the second prompt by simply pressing any key except "Y" as previous.

We now come to mass action commands. The M, Q, and Y will be performed on tagged files.

E - Erase all tagged, or all untagged files. QUESTION: "Erase tagged or untagged files (T/U) ?". Any key other than T or U will abort the process. If you respond with T or U, the question "Do you wish to be

prompted (Y/N/A) ?" is asked. If you select "N", all selected files are deleted and listed by Sweep. "A" is the Abort command. If you select "Y", the question "Delete (Y/N/A) ?" is asked.

Be warned that if you have chosen to delete untagged files, and one happens to be "READ ONLY", Sweep will prompt as usual, but unfortunately only accepts "Y" as the answer. This error does NOT occur if the files selected are tagged.

M - Mass copy tagged files.

QUESTION: "Copy to drive/user ?". Type the drive/user number and hit

<RETURN>.

Again you can use V to verify that all files are copied correctly.

Q - Squeeze or Unsqueeze tagged files. QUESTION: "Squeeze, Unsqueeze, or Reverse ?". Any key other than S, U, or R will abort. The "R" command squeeze unsqueezed, and unsqueeze squeezed files. The "Q" command creates NEW files, so you must have enough space on your disk, and remember, a squeezed file, when unsqueezed, can increase in size by up to 50%. The type of files we are talking about here are usually in a LIBRARY (An article on NULU and LIBRARY use will come later). Squeezed files are marked with a Q. As an example:-Wordstar.DQC.

Y - Set status of all tagged files. QUESTION: "Which flags (1-4, R, S, A) ?". Here you type the numbers and letters of the flags you wish to set and hit <RETURN>. Any number and letter not typed will cause that flag to reset (off). <RETURN> alone aborts, and any character other than 1 - 4, R, S, A, will reset all flags (off).

Now, you may wonder why we want to set the status flags? Well, here is an explanation of what happens and how you could use the flags. One, two, three, and four set the eighth bit of the first four bytes of the file name and are used by CP/M and called Compatibility attributes. "R", "S", and "A" will set the eighth bit of the three bytes of the file type. "R" makes it READ ONLY, "S" makes it SYSTEM, and "A" makes it ARCHIVE. CP/M will use the eighth bit of the first character of the file type to mark it READ ONLY, the second character of the type to mark it a System file, and the last character of the type to mark it as an Archive. Because the eighth bit is not used when sending the file name to the screen it is normally impossible to see if the bit is

On or Off, but Sweep can be PATCHED to show the bit marked in REVERSE HIGHLIGHT on our Commodore systems, as we can turn on reverse video on our RGB monitors. Here is how to patch NSWP207 (use a copy).

You can use Edfile or SID. The string length to start highlighting is stored at 0104 followed by the command in hex code. The string length to end highlighting is stored at 010B followed by the command in hex code.

NSWP	OLD	NEW
Addr.	Hex	Hex
0104	00	03 : Number of bytes to turn on Reverse video
0105	00	1B : Command
0106	00	47 : to turn
0107	00	34 : on
010B	00	03 : Number of bytes to turn off Reverse
010C	00	1B : Command
010D	00	47 : to turn
010E	00	30 : off

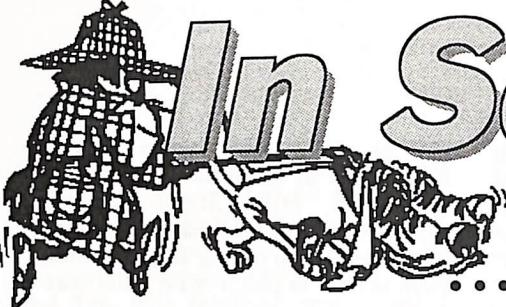
I do not have an original NSWP207, but I think the old address given above is correct. Anyway, the new one is what you want. Now here is how you can use the first four bits of a filename. You may have several files which are linked to one program, but with all having different names. Well, you can turn on bit one of all files you know relate to each other. Turn on bits one and two to mark another set, and bits one, two, and three for yet another, and so on. Now, when Sweep lists the directory, ALL your files will have the appropriate bits show upon your screen in reverse video. You can tell which ones go with which, and whether they are Read Only, System, or Archive files at a glance. NSWP207 was written by Dave Rand, a Canadian, and is in the Public Domain. His program is probably on every disk used by CP/M people all over the world.

Enjoy 'till next time.



When it comes to 8 bit computers, vote 1 for Commodore Network, scumbags!





In Search of....

...The Prince of Printers

Buying a printer is one of the most important decisions made by any computer owner. If you are serious about your computing, it is not a decision about whether or not you should buy one, but WHICH one do you buy! In this article, I will try to offer a little guidance in this all-important decision.

What's it Gunna Cost?

Ah! the all important question. Like any major new purchase, the first consideration in most cases is cost. We all have a budget to keep to (some of us more so than others), and, as much as we would wish it otherwise, oftentimes those high-end, high-priced beauties are just out of the question (mainly because the missus packs a mean wallop!).

Nevertheless, for those that may be able to afford them, we will look at laser and bubble-jet printers, along with the "normal" nine and twenty-four pin machines. Bear in mind that, despite what the salesman may say, the most expensive unit may well not be the best buy for you, and could well add very little to your computing environment and the output you achieve.

Don't get me wrong, most salesmen are not out to rip you off! They do, however, generally suffer from a remarkable lack of knowledge (especially when you are dealing with chain stores and the like) about the Commodore 8-bits and their requirements and capabilities. It seems that, in the printer manufacturing world, civilization ends at the Big Blue and Apple. This is not necessarily the fault of the salesperson themselves, but of the manufacturing companies and their distribution networks. Usually, their product information sheets deal only with these machines, and all others are left to work it out for themselves. So, first rule of thumb when dealing with salespeople is to ASK questions. Don't rely on their knowledge of the product to see you through. It may indeed be very thorough, but it may not necessarily be pertinent to your requirements. If you can't get a satisfactory answer, ask someone else, or get hold of some product information, or, better still, the manual. Remember, the wrong choice here could cost you big time, not only money wise, but also in valuable time

wasted in setting up and trying to get the damn thing to work properly. And even if you get it working, you can be left paying big money for sub-standard copy. You wouldn't be the first one who's purchased an expensive machine only to find that they could have done a lot more with something a little cheaper.

Media

And to continue painting this "rosie" picture, it is also worth considering that this first, up-front payment is not the only cost you will need to meet when running a printer. Running costs can eat up a major portion of your weekly computer budget. Can you afford to spend \$120 - \$150 on a tube of toner for your newly purchased laser, or even worse, \$300 plus for a drum kit for your said machine? Admittedly, these two items are rarely purchased by the home laser owner simply because both units last so long, but they are considerable up-front costs which must be paid in one hit. You could well have gone through a couple of hundred dollars worth of ribbons on that nine-pin of yours in the same amount of time, but this is an easier expense to meet as you pay for each ribbon as and when you need it. On the positive side, my laser gives me, on average, some 3000 pages of print per toner (a laser uses similar technology to Photocopiers), with the drum unit needing (on average) replacement every 12000 copies.

But ink is not the only cost, what about the paper you are printing on? This must also be considered in the context that different printers WILL have different needs, and at a cost!

If your printer uses a friction feed method (i.e. rollers to grab and pull the paper up past the print head) it should be able to use almost any A4 paper on the market. Prices per sheet for suitable paper for use with these sorts of printers can start as low as less than a cent a sheet (if you are in the right place at the right time), but generally average in the one to two cents a sheet price range. Look for no lighter than 75 gsm, as any lighter and two problems will occur. The first is that the paper becomes too thin and unsuitable for quality print-outs or for using both sides without "ghosting" (i.e. you can see what's on the other side). The second, and possibly more serious, is

that you tend to get more crumpling and tears as the paper gets lighter.

If, however, your machine only uses a tractor feed (which pulls the paper through the printer via those perforated strips you find along the side of computer paper), you can find yourself paying just under two cents a sheet for recycled paper, and up to around four cents a sheet if buying in smaller packs of 250 or so. Once again, I would recommend the 75 gsm MINIMUM weight for your paper for the same reasons, but, in the case of tractor feed, the tearing will occur more frequently due to the nature of the method used. Personally, I feel 80 gsm is more acceptable for use with tractor feeds. Keep well away from 60 gsm material. This is far too light, and you can pick up good recycled paper for roughly the same price and make a greenie happy at the same time.

Lastly, if the printer under consideration uses thermal paper, look at least doubling your paper costs.

So, you see, there's a lot to consider!



OK, I've got you worried, I can see it in your eyes! Well, there's nothing to really worry about, you know. The purpose of this article is merely to get you thinking about this purchase. A wise decision, well thought out, can enhance a computerist's enjoyment of his hobby immensely, adding facets hitherto undreamed of. We've bought a few of the cost considerations to your attention, and these ARE important, but there are far more important things to come and that only YOU can answer for yourself. The cost of paper and ribbon is of little concern if you only use your printer to write one or two letters a week, however, they do have a considerable bearing if you churn out page after page of correspondence, or a monthly magazine. In other words, your costs will relate directly to your printer USE, which is what we are going to look at now.

Printer Use

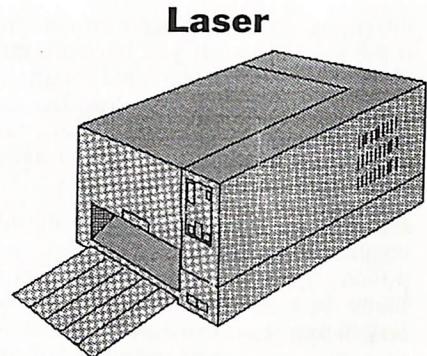
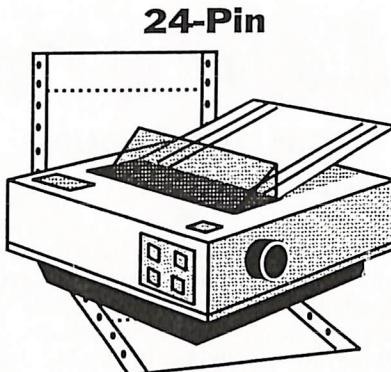
Before you even think about picking up a new printer, sit down and look at what you need. What will be its major use. Will it need a graphics capability, do you use GEOS (can have a

significant bearing on your decision). DON'T make this a WISH list, make it a listing of what you NEED. Do you REQUIRE the sort of reproduction of text and graphics that, say, a bubble-jet or even a laser is capable of? How much use will your new investment get? All this is pertinent for reasons that, I hope, will become a little more obvious shortly. As I said above, there is a BIG difference between using a printer once a week, and using it continuously.

All printers are NOT made equal. Some are better at one thing than others. Let's have a look at each printer type in general, their strengths and weaknesses, in order to give you a rough idea of what type will best suit your needs.

9-Pin

The old stalwart, robust, hard working printer type which, like their more fancied cousins, the 24-pins, offer possibly the widest choice in printers for the Computerist. Generally the most affordable, modern nine-pin printers can be high in technological sophistication. They print faster and more quietly than their top-of-the-line counterparts of even just a few years ago, and are incredibly versatile, handling almost any need which may arise for a printer. I've seen these retail new from about \$150 (though what the quality was like, I don't know!). It will pay to make a few enquiries about the ribbon used. If it can utilise a "generic" type as used by another common printer, cost of this necessity is liable to be considerably cheaper and readily available for a much longer period than if it uses a custom-designed ribbon cartridge. If you are capable of re-inking your ribbons, you may even like to consider if the ribbons used are recyclable. Buy a WELL-KNOWN brand if possible - you wouldn't be the first left out in the cold when some company folded leaving them with a cheap printer but nowhere from which to get ribbons and other necessities. This holds true throughout, whether you purchase a 9-pin or a laser.



Much of what has been said above for the 9-pin machines holds true for 24-pin versions. However, bear in mind that 24 pin printers may print graphics out slightly distorted. This can be easily rectified using a suitable printer driver in most cases. Twenty-four pin printers are dearer than their nine-pin counterparts in general, but, if you are after that little extra quality in your print outs, these may be worth considering.

Bubble-Jet

Bubble-jets are rapidly becoming more and more affordable, BUT I would tread warily here. Bubble-jet technology is advancing rapidly, and each particular model of each particular brand seems to utilise its own custom ink cartridge. Bubble-jet ink is not cheap to begin with, but as models are superseded, I've seen the cost of ink skyrocket alarmingly. On the plus side, inkjets operate quietly and produce excellent results, with quality being somewhere between a 24-pin and a 300 dpi laser output.

However, if you are like most computer owners, you will want versatility, and this is the inkjets greatest weakness in my opinion. Ink/Bubble-jets are limited to single sheet feeds (not a great problem for most users - in fact many prefer it that way!), and are excellent for transparencies, but fall down badly when it comes to such areas as labels and, to a lesser extent, graphics production. They also have a tendency to be somewhat slower than other printer types. Be aware also that copy fresh out of the printer will SMEAR, and must be handled with care at least initially, and that running costs will three to five times higher than for a 9 or 24 pin printer, or two to three times that of a laser.

Once more, the price for this technology has dropped rapidly in recent years, and in fact it is now to the stage where a few of us can seriously consider it as a serious possibility. Lasers produce the highest quality reproduction of any printer type, and are relatively cheap to operate, being only slightly more expensive to run than a 9 or 24 pin printer. Personally, the only regret I have about getting my laser is that I didn't purchase a Postscript cartridge with it. This would have allowed me to utilise GeoPubLaser and the full power of GeoPublish. However, I get by with a suitable printer driver in GEOS, and have written a driver for use within Superbase/Superscript which allows me to print out all need from these to programs with excellent results. Lasers are as versatile as the dot-matrix printers with the exception that, once more, the general rule is that they only accept single sheet feeds.

To the Shop

Having decided what our printer usage is likely to be, and setting ourselves a price range from which to buy, we can now trot off to our friendly little printer-seller feller and see what he's got to offer us. On arrival at our planned place of purchase (or at least one of several we plan to visit - no harm in shopping around, you know!), we are shown a range of printers and given the usual spiel about each in turn. If you let your "techno-lust" (your missus wishes she could put that gleam in your eyes occasionally!) take control, you'd grab that big, beautiful laser in the corner, wouldn't you. Or perhaps that sexy little bubble-jet over there, but you won't because you use a Commodore, and the damn things are worth more than your entire system put together! Nevertheless, it's a nice dream - but is it a dream?

The short answer is NO! You can fit most printers to your Commodore with minimal fuss, all it requires is a suitable interface. I use a GeoCable from Novo to connect the 128 to the laser, and it works like a dream. For those with a little hobby-electronics experience, they are not that hard to put together, and you can pick suitable

Shareware

the program is copyright. Free to distribute but only as per shareware agreements. Usually means no charge can be made other than Postage and Handling, and usually can only be distributed in its original format.

A nominal fee is usually required for continued use of shareware programs.

Freeware

the same terms and conditions as above, except that the author does not expect or require any fees.

Public Domain

The author has relinquished all copyright. The program may be modified and distributed at will. However it is usual practice for any modified versions to still give credit to the original author.

Software Definitions

interfaces up second-hand on occasion if the need arises. If you have a printer already, and it is fitted with an interface, it may pay to drag the said cable along to ensure it fits to any new acquisition, especially if your original printer is to be used as a trade-in.

However, the actual physical connection between computer and printer, though extremely important, is likely to cause less hassles than that originating from software that does not recognise your new beauty. For this reason, it is imperative that you ensure that any possible purchase offers suitable emulation modes. Most modern printers offer Epson FX-80 and/or LQ-850 support along with possible IBM Proprinter X24 emulation and can be made work on your equipment. If purchasing a 24 pin colour printer, you won't find, to my knowledge, any modern units that carry a suitable emulation. The only way I know of to utilise a modern colour printer is via GEOS and a printer driver called EPSON24PINCOLOR if you can locate it. For this reason alone, it is best to shy away from the extra expense of a 24 pin colour printer as use will only be limited.

Close in on those printers that fall within your nominated price-range. At this stage, don't worry about whether they are laser, bubble-jet, nine-pin, or whatever, as long as you find them affordable, and they are of interest. It's only when we must deal with the effective running costs and YOUR needs that we may eliminate a majority from consideration. Once again, I must warn against letting that "techno-lust" make your decision for you - it can lead to some very expensive mistakes.

You've read my little bit on the advantages/disadvantages of each printer type, and it's now up to you to decide which one is for you.

My Choice

My personal view is that, for almost every user out there, a nine-pin printer will prove more than adequate. Most of us simply do not need top-of-the-line print quality in our every day use. True, most of us will have OCCASION to produce a top quality print-out, and, in the majority of cases, the utilisation of something like "Perfect Print" from within GEOS can produce more than acceptable results. However, if you do require continuing output of high-quality copy at all times, then I would skip the 24 pin and bubble-jet and buy a laser. If that is beyond you, then look at a 24-pin before a printer utilising bubble-jet technology. These are excellent machines, but there are just too many drawbacks for my liking to recommend them to a Commodore user.



Letters Link

Continued

C.N. Distribution

Still in my home state, and Reece Isaac writes:

Thanks for passing on the info about my user group. The new group is known as Eastern Suburbs and was formed from two other groups, not three as was shown in the last issue, just a small error and probably not important, but I thought I'd try and straighten the record.

A couple of months ago I left a message with Owen James (well, I think that's who it was. The one who writes the 64 page in ACAR?) about the mention of our group (he said it was done, but I don't get that mag any longer). Anyway, Geoff Travers, the person who has agreed to be the contact person, has, over the last couple of months, had calls from all over the country, from N.S.W. to W.A., and of course, Victoria. Our last meeting had a bumper crowd for the 64 area and we even had one extra for the Amiga sig. Some of our new contacts were given Geoff's number by Mawell's!

Now what I'm trying to get around to here is that from one (presumably small) mention in a magazine available on the book shelf, we've had a flood of enquiries. Maybe it's time to look at a possible, if limited, expansion of Network to the book shelves. Not necessarily the newsagent, but may be selected computer shops that have some links with Commodore machines.

It's just a thought, and I may be out of place here, I know of the limitations and other problems that would be involved, but it appears to me that there is a void out there and Network is the vessel to fill that void. It seems that many, if not all, new owners of second-hand 64's are like islands just waiting for civilization to visit. Word of mouth may work quite adequately as far as Network's circulation growth is concerned, but it surely must be like talking to the converted, if you know what I mean? Maybe something along the lines of what Australian Geographic did when it started might be the trick?

You are certainly not out of place in bringing these ideas to our attention, Reece. In fact they are perfectly good observations. We have started to make C.N. available to clubs and user's groups at a "wholesale" rate, and this has proven modestly successful. We will most probably make a few approaches to various retail outlets over coming weeks. This latter is a

direct result of your suggestion. If anyone knows of a retail outlet supporting Commodore eight-bits that may be interested in carrying a few copies of C.N., ask them to contact us.

A bit of thanks, Disk-Coverer GEOS, and more!

Many thanks to Bill Bratby in the July C.N. for the info on printer ribbons for the MPSI/230. I buy DMP ink from Aussoft and didn't realise they sold ribbons.

I like Jane Voskamp-Jones' GEOSgenie column. I recently purchased the first one of Janes' GEOS books, it was what I needed eight years ago, not that I've had too much trouble with the Geoworks manuals. Much trial and error, 'til I got the hang of things, though. I still have a browse through my much battered manuals when I've nothing else to read.

I have just received the GEOS Disk-Coverer disk. A couple of comments that I think will better utilise the available disk space. Their are two write files (Geo and Doc) that take up nine Kbs of space, these files are, to my way of thinking, not necessary as the article in C.N. covers the contents of the disk. GeoView will not be needed on the next disk as we already have it, saving another two Kbs. Preference files are not needed as I find them a pain in the butt as well as the eyes, I prefer my screen colour setup and mouse pointer. Any pointer that Peter may put on the disk can be an icon file to be used with Mouser, saving another two Kbs. A saving of 3 Kbs plus the four Kbs unused on the disk gives a total of Kbs, which can be put to good use for other files. Apart from these few whinges, it's a good disk.

I'm sure Jane is appreciative of your comments, Don (and certainly the free advertising - grin!).

As for our first GEOS Disk-Coverer, Peter put a lot of time and trouble into its formulation, and is the first to admit that there's room for improvement. GeoView was included, and most probably will be included, room allowing, on future disks, simply to make it a lot easier for the end user to view graphics on the disk, rather than having to boot GeoPaint or track down a viewing program like GeoView itself. Personally, I too do not see the need for the text files, or the preferences, but these fall within the domain of Peter's editorial licence.

Headings

Up in the Sunshine State, and Vic. Mobbs writes:

Congratulations on the use of HEADINGS in the "Letter's Link". Wow! It really is more readable and a classification dream now.

Such a nice clean copy and up the right way too! (Ed - obviously written before the September edition arrived!).

A great effort, interesting, and plenty for the C128 enthusiast too!

Thanks Vic. We still have a ways to go though. Too many obvious mistakes have crept into the pages of C.N. over recent months. This is partly due to a "trainee" taking care of the actual copying, but I should be supervising more carefully myself, and must therefore take a share of the blame. We will certainly need to get our act together soon.

Looking for a Mouse

Back in Victoria, and the town of Maryborough, and Ms. M. Smith writes:

Also, could you help me. As you are selling mouse mats, could you tell me where I can buy a mouse for a 64? Also, I find it hard to find decent joysticks. I've tried local stores in Maryborough, Ballarat, and Bendigo. I hope you can help me.

Well, Ms. Smith, don't fret. There are still a number of places around from which you can get Commodore compatible joysticks and mice, that is provided you don't mind shopping via mail order. Probably closest to home for you is Ritronics in Melbourne. They offer a mail order service and have several joysticks available that are suitable. Of course, what makes a "decent" joystick is very much a matter of personal taste.

Another firm worthy of your support is Korella Trading who advertise on occasion within these pages, and they can supply either joysticks or a mouse as required. Another possible source for a joystick is Woombug in Queensland. They offer the "Winner" stickless joystick, something I've personally never seen (hint for a review sample there, Scott - grin!).

Another possible source for a mouse (unsure whether they carry joysticks at this stage), is Compu-Aid Pty Ltd., and I know that CMD have recently released the new Smart-Mouse and trackball (both of which I am trying to arrange a review of), and these should be available via Novo Computer Hardware.

Addresses:
Ritronics: Bag 620, Rosebank MDC,
Clayton South, Vic. 3169, Ph: 1-800 33

5757 (orders only), or (03) 543 7877.
Korella Trading: 1/505 Pacific Hwy.,
Belmont, N.S.W., 2280, Ph: (049) 45
8455

Woombug: Scott Roseboom, C/O Post
Office, Woobye, Qld., 4559
Compu-Aid Pty. Ltd.: 3-38 South St.,
Rydalmere, N.S.W., 2116.
Novo Computer Hardware: P.O. Box
237 Mayfield, N.S.W., 2304, Ph: (049)
201 102

More on the Interface

From Geoff Travers of Wantirna in Victoria comes this in reply to a cry for help from Les Fletcher recently:

I have been using one of these interfaces for nearly ten years with no problems. As you have gathered, there should be another connection to plug into the cassette port. As this connection supplies +5 volt power to the interface, it is no surprise that it doesn't work.

Proceed as follows:

Remove the black plastic cover on the back of the plug which plugs into the serial port. You should find that the cable between this plug and the interface has five wires. Four of these go to pins of the plug (black, brown, green, and white). The fifth wire (blue) will probably be disconnected. Pick up the blue wire, and join to it a length of wire to go to the cassette port on the computer. Lead this wire in through the back of the cover. Insulate the join. Then replace the cover.

The other end of the wire you have added should go to a +5 volt supply on the computer. Originally this was pin 2 on the cassette port (pin 2 is the second from the left, on top of the socket, looking from the side). You will have to find a suitable plug. One idea would be to use a plug from an old datasette.

Thanks for that, Geoff. We've had an excellent response to Les's problem, and it's absolutely fantastic to see so many people come to his aid. This sort of thing really shows how strong the C64/12 community is.

Cardco +G Printer Interface

And leaving lovely Victoria once more, Euan Fry writes from Canberra as follows:

In the August issue of C.N. there is a request for help regarding the Cardco +G printer interface from Les Fletcher. I have one of these interfaces which I have used successfully for a number of years, so I can give the information that Les needs.

The connection to the cassette port is definitely required by this interface. The connection supplies the +5 volts power to the interface, and naturally it

will not operate without it.

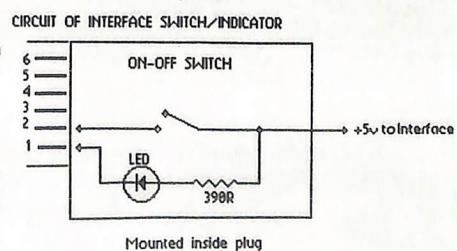
As originally supplied there is a plug on the end of a single wire which comes out of the back of the serial port plug on the connection cable which links the interface to the computer. This plug goes into the cassette port and has a card edge connector on its rear so that the datasette can still be connected to the computer.

It should not be too difficult for Les to find the +5 volt lead in the connection cable and to fix up a suitable plug to connect it to the cassette port. In my interface the lead is red and is additional to the thinner leads of the serial cable itself. If it can't be found then the interface will have to be opened up and a lead soldered to the appropriate point inside it. The lead has to connect to connector two or "B" in the cassette port - but, alternatively, +5 volts can also be obtained from connector two in the user port, or pin seven in either of the control (joystick) ports.

In my own setup I have been able to obtain the plug off an old datasette to use for the interface power connection. This has the advantage that I have fitted a sub-miniature switch and 3mm LED into it, so that the interface can easily be switched on and off from the front of my C128D (see circuit diagram).

Just a further comment about switching the interface on and off. It seems inevitable that there are some conflicts between the printer interface and other peripherals on the serial line, especially disk drives. My worst experience of this was with GEOS on the C64, when the disk drive would not respond while the printer interface was on - I was only able to overcome the problem by printing files out of the RAM expansion. In all other cases, however, problems were overcome by just switching the interface on at the time of printing; switching the interface either on or off does not reset the computer, although it does reset the printer.

Once again, thanks to all that responded to the initial plea for help. I must also take this opportunity to say thanks to all those who didn't get their response printed. Euan's response was included herewith because of that little extra information he supplied. Thanks Euan, and everyone else!



Commodore Network Merchandising

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Cee-64 Alive! - American disk based magazine for the C64/128. Latest edition consists of six disk sides. Issued six times a year and available for just \$35.00 Sample Disk - JUST \$4.00

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All previous editions of Commodore Network are available at a cost of \$3.50 each, post/packing inclusive within Australia. Foreign Subscribers should remit \$4.50 Australian per copy. Past Disk-Coverers are also available at \$2.50 within Australia and \$3.50 Australian each Overseas.

All software orders within Australia should include \$2 to cover postage costs. New Zealand orders add \$3 Aus. to cover postage, and for orders from elsewhere, a postage fee of \$5 Aus. is necessary.

Diskette Orders should include postage of \$2 and 50cents per disk box within Australia, New Zealand Diskette Orders should include \$3 plus 50 cents a disk box per order. Sorry we cannot accept orders for diskettes from elsewhere.